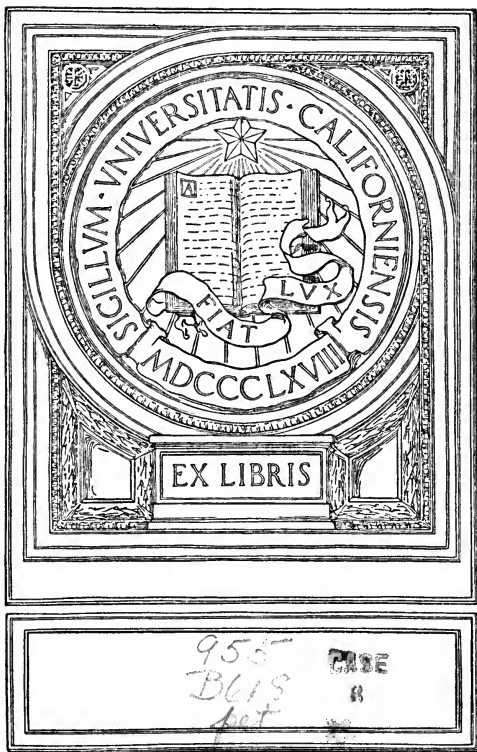


By Robert M. Bird

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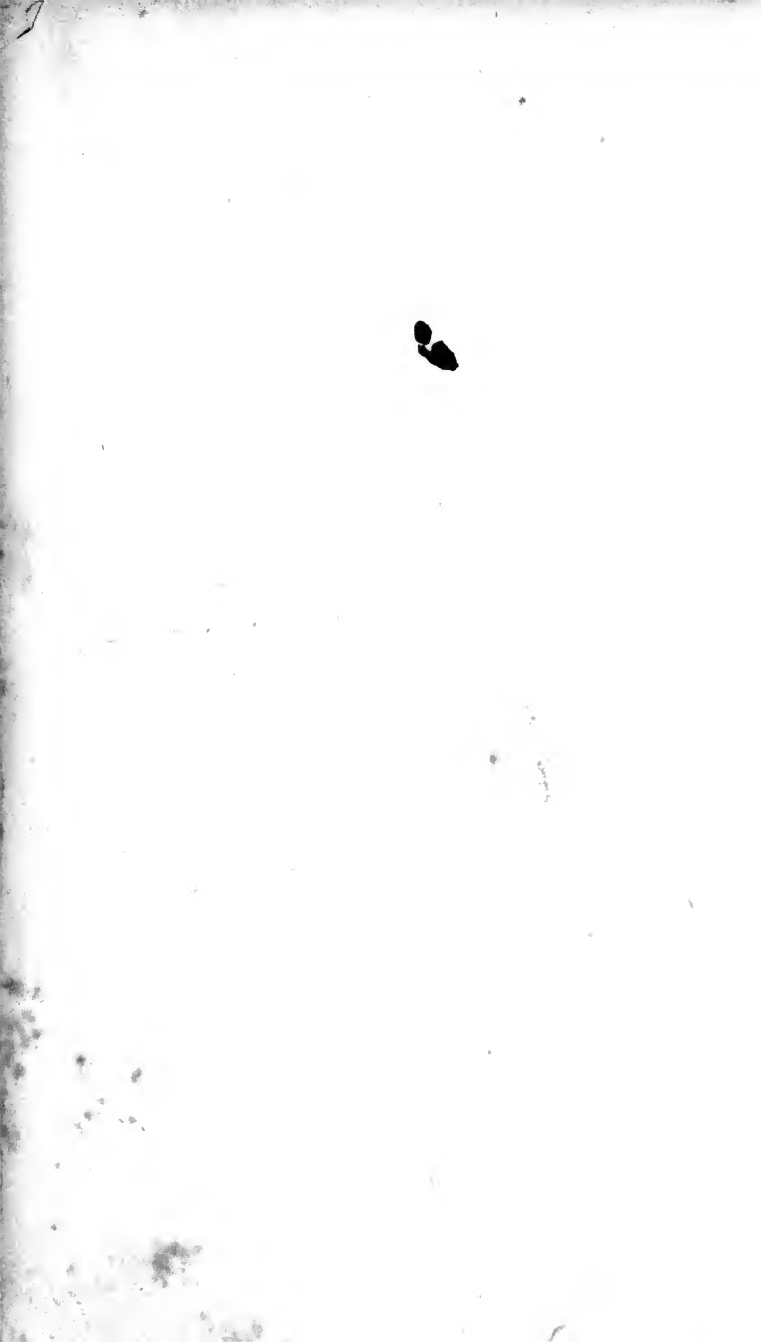
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PETER PILGRIM.

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PETER PILGRIM:

OR

A RAMBLER'S RECOLLECTIONS.

BY THE AUTHOR

OF "CALAVAR," "NICK OF THE WOODS," &c.

R. M. Bird.

And sometimes I do for my recreation now and then walk abroad, look into the world, and cannot choose but make some little observation.

BURTON'S *Anat. of Melancholy.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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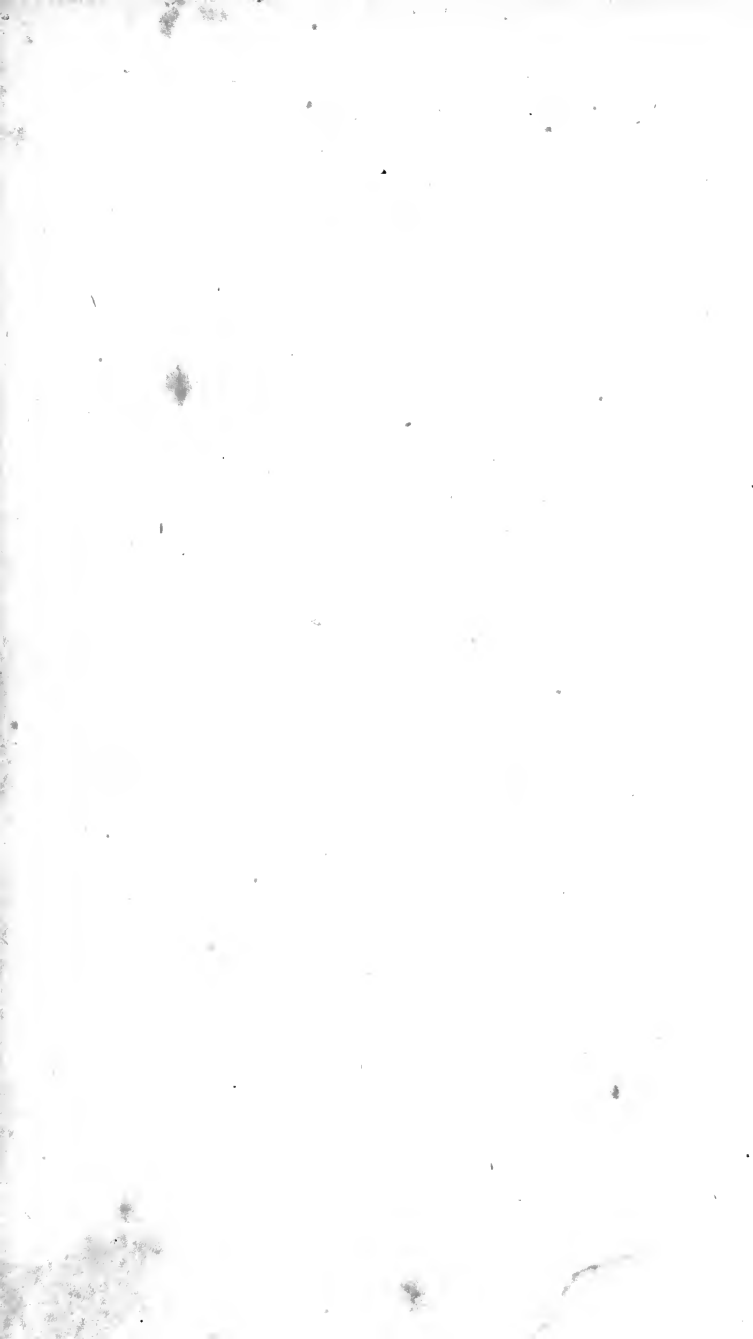
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NOTICE.

Two of the pieces contained in the following pages—the Mammoth Cave and The Tale of a Snag—appeared some time since in the American Monthly Magazine. They are repeated here, not from any opinion that they are peculiarly deserving of republication, but because they properly belong to, and were always intended to form a part of, the budget of “Peter Pilgrim.”



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PETER PILGRIM.

CHAPTER INTRODUCTORY.

“TRAVELLERS,” quoth Rosalind, the wise and the witty, “have great reason to be sad;” an assurance to which I know not whether I feel inclined to subscribe assent or not; the opinion of the world, (and to the opinions of the world I always endeavour, as a modest man, to square my own,) judging from the world’s practice, being directly the reverse. To travel is to gain experience, (so runs the argument;) and to have experience is to have that which makes us sad.

To travel is undoubtedly to put ourselves in the way of experience, since every highway of the world may be said to be paved with it; but the task of picking it up, while thundering along at the locomotive speed of modern travel, is no easy matter, even to a

philosopher ; and as for travellers in general, the multitudes of busy idlers, who “ sell their own lands to see other men’s,” rambling up and down with no better or wiser motives than a mere rage after novelty, and the ambition to do what their betters have done before them—to talk bad French in the Palais Royal, and swim in a gondola at Venice—it is, this same experience, a kind of lumber with which they would be little likely to burthen themselves, were it even to blow up in their faces like dust, at every turn of their chariot wheels.

It is only the man of Jaques’s temper whom travel makes sad. He who is of an humour to see things on the dark side, to moralize instead of admiring, will find occasion enough for melancholy. To such a man, every inch of the earth’s surface is pregnant with thought, every scene has its record, every countenance its lesson; thought, record, and lesson being, for the most part, of a very sombre and lugubrious character. To travel is, in such a case, only to become better acquainted with human folly, to ponder more deeply on the extraordinary perversity of a race, which, with the means of making a paradise of the globe, its glorious dwelling-place, has labour-

ed for sixty centuries to convert it into a house of mourning, and having succeeded, is still toiling with might and main to keep it so. It is to force upon the mind those dreary recollections of the past, those dark forebodings of the future—revealments and portents of human destiny—which are so painful to the heart, so humiliating to the pride, I may even add, so terrific to the imagination, of him who loves, or would love, his species.

But to be a Jaques is to be one man picked out of ten thousand. The multitude know nothing of moralizing; and sadness and grieving—unless when one sighs over a long reckoning, or groans at a bad dinner—form no part of the catalogue of a traveller's grievances. It may be, as Rosalind says, that travellers *have reason* to be sad; but it is very certain that they are not, and will not be sad.

But whatever may be the philosophy of the matter, men were born to travel. The erratic propensity is a part of human nature; and were it not for a dearth of means, (and here one may see the excellent uses of even so cursed a thing as poverty,) we should have the whole world shooting madly out of its sphere, all mankind gadding together to

Rome and Paris, and not a soul left minding its business at home. Every one longs to see the world; there is pleasure, there is distinction, nay, there is power in it. What importance may not a man assume who can say, "Thus they do in Rome," "It is so and so in Athens;" who can tell the architect of brick houses of the dome of St. Peters and the columns of the Parthenon; inform builders of wooden bridges how the Romans constructed triumphal arches; and instruct projectors of water-works for supplying a city with potable liquid, how heathen Copts bale out the Nile with buckets. Who so irresistible in the drawing-room as the happy youth who can expatiate on Alp and Appenine, the Isles of Greece and the Mother of Nations, the Memnon and the Pyramids, the Dead Sea and the City of the Cross? Black Othello had never eclipsed his Venetian rivals in the love of the fair Desdemona, had it not been for his "travel's history," his ravishing accounts of the Anthropophagi, and men whose heads did grow beneath their shoulders.

To the dignity which belongs to the travelled man, I, Peter Pilgrim, (otherwise Palmer, which means pretty much the same thing,)

of Pilgrimdale, may lay claim in an eminent degree; having, as I may say, visited nearly every place of note in the whole world, ancient or modern—Rome and Jerusalem, Carthage, Troy, Alexandria, Memphis, Palmyra, Canton, Lima, Mexico, Paris, London, and heaven knows how many more besides; all which, to make the wonder more wonderful, I have visited without so much as stirring beyond the bounds of these goodly United States: a fact which proves the convenience of the practice prevailing among us, (though decried by some injudicious people on account of its servility,) of helping ourselves, when we have new towns to name, to the best names we can lay our hands on; for hereby may a man perform the grand tour without putting himself to any great trouble or cost, or losing much time in the expedition.

In truth, my travelling propensities have never been of a truly cosmopolitan character; and my ambition to see the world has been destitute of some of the features that mark the ambition of the many. Crowds delight not me, nor the places where crowds most do congregate; and when the impulse of peregrination drives me into the world, it is

commonly into some part of the world deserted by other travellers ; where, among sequestered roads and shrines unknown, I feel as much delight as others experience in crowded highways and among places of renown. In youth, my inclinations always led me to solitary and out-of-the-way places, instead of to those most universally seductive to schoolboy brains: while my schoolmates were performing their pilgrimages to the most celebrated orchard or hen-roost, I, led by some irresistible influence, preferred to go dabbling in the marshes for plover's eggs and flag-roots ; and visited the flying-squirrel in his woody den, whilst they were rushing pell-mell into a farmer's melon-patch.

The propensity of youth becomes the passion of manhood ; and hence behold me still a gatherer of plover's eggs and flag-roots, though on a larger scale. My ancient mates desert the orchard and hen-roost, to wander over blue Lemans, rolling Rhines, soaring Alps ; whilst I, wandering still further from the highway, go seeking the lovelier waters, the nobler streams, the almost equally magnificent mountains, concealed in our own green forests at home.

Among the varied scenes of our own wide

spread and buxom sovereignties, I have begun my pilgrimage; being somewhat of Goldsmith's opinion, that—for travellers as well as patriots—

“Our first, best country, ever is at home;—”

and that a man who is bent on seeing the world, can do nothing better or wiser than begin the enterprise by making the acquaintance of his own native land. In our own deep forests, on our own bright savannas, our mighty rivers and lakes, among the wild men and wild scenes the traveller must here so often encounter, I have found, and still find, a charm, an endless fund of interest; which, if it be of a different character from that yielded by old world travel, is none the less agreeable. I find not, indeed, the memorials and things of fame that “renown” the roads of Europe; no monkish ruins in the vale, no toppling castle on the crag, to tell the tale of man's early baseness, his rapine and superstition; no array of pomp and splendour to stir the soul to servile admiration or cut-throat envy. None of these attractions—mementoes of a past of folly and depravity—await us at home. Antiquity has little to do

with America: we find her, an obscure, shapeless, vanishing phantom, only in the forest, under the shade of magnolias and cypresses, that have overgrown and buried, fathoms deep, all vestiges of the past. And it is in the forest, where man struggles with nature for empire, and where, as if magic ruled the day, as soon as an oak falls to the ground, a city sprouts up from its roots; and in man, the worker of the marvel, that we must look for the objects of interest to replace those the foreign traveller finds, and ponders over, full of thoughts that every body else has thought before him, in climes beyond the sea.

In these, my peregrinations, I have had with me my pilgrim's scrip, being a sufficient satchel of buckram and leather, into which I did not fail to cast whatsoever little treasures it was my fortune to pick up on the way—flowers from the forest, shells from the river, pebbles from the lake; or, in plainer language, sketches of scenery and character, life and manners; anecdotes, legends, observations; every thing, in short, that was interesting in itself, or illustrative of points of interest in the regions through which it was my lot to pass.

From this collection, which several years

of travel have seen swell into magnitude, I have selected the materials of the present volumes; which, if they do not instruct—as, indeed, they do not aim to do—may yet amuse an hour of idleness.

THE LEGEND
OF
MERRY THE MINER.

CHAPTER I.

THE central region of the United States, embracing the district of East Tennessee and the adjacent mountain counties of Georgia, Virginia, and North Carolina, is less known to Americans generally than the remotest nooks of Florida, or the North West Territory. At a distance from the great routes of travel, without navigable rivers, presenting on every side a frowning barrier of wild and savage mountains, heaped in continuous and inextricable confusion over its whole surface, a portion of it, too, still in the hands of its aboriginal possessors,* it has repelled, rather than invited, visitation,

* In the hands of its original possessors no longer :

“The stranger came with iron hand,” &c.

and retains an air of solitude and seclusion, which will vanish only when the engineer has tracked its glens and gorges with paths of iron, and flying locomotives thunder along its ridges. When that period shall have arrived, it will perhaps be discovered, that no part of the United States offers greater attractions to the lovers of the picturesque and the wonderful, that none opens a grander display of scenery, or richer exchequer of curiosities. Then, too, perhaps—if the bursting of the world into his sequestered valley should arouse some sleepy Tennessean from inglorious inactivity, infuse into his breast a little pride of country, a little shame that a clime so fair and beneficent should want a historian, that a state so powerful and distinguished should have produced no son able or willing to write the records of her days of trial and adventure—it will be found that no part of the country possesses a greater or more interesting fund even of legendary and historic incident. The sparklings of the lost Pleiad of American states—the little republic of *Frankland*, that scintillated a moment on that ridgy horizon, and then was extinguished for ever—and the campaigns of the gallant Sevier, are worthy to be chroni-

cled with the strangest vicissitudes, and the bravest achievements, of that eventful era.

The 'rarities'—as the old geographers would have termed them—of this mountain land, comprise waterfalls—the Tuccoa and the Falling Water, for example—with others, perhaps, as grand and as lovely—whirlpools and sinking rivers, cliffs, and caverns; and the still more interesting memorials of antiquity—the mounds and fortifications; the painted cliffs; the rocks on which the eye, or the imagination, traces the foot-prints of shodden horses, and even the tracks of wheeled carriages; the graveyards of pygmies and giants, whence have been dug so many thousand bones of manikins of two feet in stature, and Patagonians of eight;* the axes and

* The belief in the former existence of races of pygmies and giants in the Mississippi Valley, is extremely prevalent in many Western communities; though the visits of scientific men to the cemeteries of the former have been productive of results that have shaken the faith of many in regard to the pygmies. The celebrated graveyard on the Meramec river, in Missouri, was examined by some of the scientific gentlemen attached to Long's Expedition, who found bones of men and infants of the ordinary Indian races in great abundance, but no others. Bones from the Lilliputian graves in White County, Tennessee, have also been proved to belong to mortals of ordinary stature. The facts have not been so satisfactorily settled in relation to the giants. There are thousands of re-

other implements of copper, brass, iron, silver; the coins; the walled wells; the old gold mines, with furnaces and crucibles; the yellow-haired mummies; and other vestiges of the unknown and perished races of men that once possessed, it would seem, the whole Mississippi Valley.

Of these relics many are found in the caves, which, besides the above-mentioned yellow-haired mummies and Cyclopean skeletons, (for the big bones are usually, though not exclusively, found in caverns,) are, in some cases, reported to possess still more astonishing monuments of the primeval world—petrified *men*—stony warriors and hunters of the days of Nimrod, who, with dog and spear, chased the *megalonix* into his hole, and there perished with him; or antediluvian gold-miners that plied their trade in these darksome retreats, and, in unholy passion, “forgot themselves to marble,” or were transformed by the demons of the mine into their own effigies.

Such wild stories, frequently revived, and spectable men in Kentucky and Tennessee, who aver that they have disinterred, and measured, human bones that must have belonged to individuals eight feet in height; but none of these bones have ever come in the way of *savans*.

passing from mouth to mouth with various additions or diminutions, though regarded as novelties, I suspect, must, in some way or other, owe their origin to one common source, to some fragmentary hint or distorted reminiscence of the ancient, veritable, but now almost forgotten legend of *Merry the Miner*—a wight of whose adventures I have been at the pains to inquire and record every particular that is now remembered.

Of the birthplace and early adventures of this remarkable personage nothing is known; even his “given” name has been lost, his surname only surviving, with the suffix that supplies the place of the lost portion. He first appeared, at a very early day, in one of the extreme eastern counties of Tennessee, a settler like others, as it seemed; for he had a wife and family, with whom he seated himself, or perhaps *squatted*, upon a farm that might, though none of the richest, have yielded him a comfortable subsistence, had he taken the pains to cultivate it.

But Merry, it soon appeared, had other thoughts and objects; for, having completed a rude cabin sufficient to shelter his children, cleared for them a few acres of ground, and helped them to set it in corn, for the winter’s sub-

sistence, he straightway seemed to discharge from his mind all farther care of them, and began to ramble up and down the mountains, a bag slung upon one shoulder, a rifle on the other, remaining absent from home generally all day long, and sometimes a week together. At first, he was supposed by his few neighbors who noted his proceedings, to be absent on hunting expeditions, until it was observed that he seldom returned so well provided with game as with fragments of stone and minerals, with which useless commodities his sack was usually well filled.

This produced questions, and questions brought replies; and Merry, who, though absorbed by his pursuits, was not of a selfish or incommunicative disposition, gave them to understand he had better game in view than bear, elk, or deer; in short, that he was hunting for gold; with which precious metal, he averred, these very mountains abounded; a fact which, he declared, with a great deal of wild enthusiasm, he was very sure of; for, first, an old Cherokee Indian had told him so when he was a boy; secondly, a great scholar had assured him of the same thing, declaring that the Spaniards had once, in the days of De Soto, been at the mountain mines and

worked them, till the Indians drove them away, or killed them; thirdly, his father, who had, in his time, been an Indian trader, and made a fortune thereby, was of the same opinion, because of the jealousy of the Indians, who would never suffer a white man to examine too closely into their soil for minerals;* and finally, because every one knew there were bits of gold sometimes found in Virginia and the Carolinas, along the rivers that flowed from the mountains, from which it was plain the gold must have been washed down *from* the mountains. To this he added, that he had himself been, for ten years or more, hunting for the precious place of deposit, and it was, therefore, but reasonable to suppose he must soon succeed in finding it. He had often discovered places where there was a little gold to be gathered, but it was a very little; and he should not stop short till he had lighted on the true mines that had been worked of old by the Spaniards, the discovery of which would certainly be a fortune to him.

This representation had its effects upon Merry's friends; who, being shown a store of

* This jealousy was remarked, many years since, by Bartram, in his rambles among the Cherokee mountains.

minerals, gathered by himself in different places, and abounding, as he said, in lead, copper, and other ignoble metals, together with sundry touchstones, a blowpipe, a bottle of acid, and other simple implements of the art metallurgic, of which he had in some way learned the use, were very ready to assist him in a pursuit that promised to lead to fortune; and for a few months, the whole neighbourhood was rambling with him over the hills, in search of hidden treasures. As no gold was, however, found, nor, indeed, the least sign of any, the enthusiasm for gold-hunting soon abated in all but Merry himself, who, at first deserted by his friends, was at last derided by them as a crack-brained schemer, whose efforts were more likely to ruin a fortune than to make one.

And, indeed, it appeared from some expressions of Merry's wife, who by no means relished her husband's neglect of his family and affairs, that he had already, or his family for him, paid dear for his gold mine, having been originally the possessor of a sufficient and comfortable estate, a good patrimonial farm, and slaves to till it; all which had slipped through his fingers in the course of his ten years' wanderings.

Desertion and derision, however, produced no change in honest Merry; who having remained long enough in his first seat to explore every nook and cranny among the adjacent hills, and satisfy himself that the object of his search was not there, drew up his stakes one fine morning, removed his habitation some fifty or sixty miles further west, and there, having constructed another cabin, and cleared another field, recommenced his explorations precisely as he had done before, and with exactly the same results; except that on this, as well as on all future occasions, his character having travelled before him, he found no neighbours willing to unite with him in his enterprise. But this was an affair of no consequence to Merry the Miner; who, equable and contented on all subjects except that of his gold mine, was equally satisfied to share his hopes and labours with others, or to enjoy them alone. Nor did the ridicule and general contempt under which he fell, much affect him: "By and by," said he, "I shall find a gold mine, and then they will treat me well enough."

The reproaches of his dear spouse were not always received with the same equanimity; but the practice which caused them

was the surest means to avoid them; and accordingly some of the uncharitable have hinted, that if his golden monomania had not been enough to drive him from his habitation, the lectures of his helpmate would have been cause sufficient.

Again unsuccessful, again the untiring Merry changed his quarters; and this he continued to do year after year, until he had consumed ten more years in the unavailing search. By this time his spirit was fainting a little within him, and doubts began to oppress him sore. Gray hairs were thickening on his temples, and his fortune was not yet made; on the contrary, poverty, after many premonitory knocks, had passed his door, and taken the best seat on his hearth. His children had grown up, and grown up unaccustomed to rule, at least for the five last years; for, five years before, Merry had followed his wife to the grave; after which her children took matters into their own hands, and grew up the way they liked best. One after another, they dropped away from their father to seek their own fortunes, until at last, one—one only of all remained, his youngest daughter, who was handsome and, as Merry thought, good, for she was faithful when the

rest were found wanting. "Very well," said Merry, as he again trudged to the mountains, one bright morning; "when I find a gold mine, she shall know what it is to be a good daughter, for she shall have it all to herself. No, not all," he muttered; "for the rest will come back, and they must have something, to know their father was hunting gold, not for himself, but for them. But Susie, my darling Susie, shall have the most of it, because she was faithful to her father."

When Merry returned again from the mountains, his darling Susie was gone—gone with a villain, for whom she had forsaken her parent. Merry sat down in his deserted cabin, and there remained for a week, content, for the first time in twenty years, to remain at home, when home had nothing further to attract him.

On the seventh day, Merry again seized his sack and rifle, and whistling to his dog Snapper—for so he called him—an ugly, starveling cur that had long been his companion, and now was the only living thing upon whose fidelity he knew he could rely—made his way up the wild little valley in which his cabin stood, following the course of a brawling river that watered it. This river—fed by a hundred

brooks that came chattering down the sides of the mountain, in whose cloven and contorted flank the little vale was but one of many embayed recesses—Merry had often before thriddled, examining its different forks up to their springs; where—upon his principle of belief, that when gold is found in a river, it must have been washed down from its sources—he always seemed to think there was the best prospect of discovering his long sought mine. He had thus followed them all, or thought he had done so; and having found them all equally destitute of treasure, he would himself, perhaps, have been puzzled to say why he now set out again in the same direction. Another person, however, might have found a sufficient explanation in the agitation of mind of the poor wanderer, whose every look and step bore witness to the disorder of his spirits.

Up this rivulet, then, he wandered, without well knowing or noting whither; clambering up the ledgy banks of one of its chief springs, now nearly dried up, which he began, after a time, to have a vague suspicion he had never before explored. It had a new, fresh look about it that gradually wrought upon his attention, and was fast wakening him from ab-

straction ; when his reverie was further put to flight by Snapper, the dog, who set up a yelp or howl, Merry knew not which, but it sounded very wild and mournful in that desolate place, and fell to scratching in the shingly bed of the torrent, as if disinterring a rat, or some other object of equal interest, ever and anon looking around to his master, as if to invite him to his assistance.

Merry approached and took from under the paw of the dog a bit of stone, or sparry concretion, of a very odd appearance, having a kind of rude resemblance to a thumb and fingers grasping something between them, and that something exhibiting, at a broken corner, a certain yellow gleam that made Merry the Miner's heart leap within him.

With a little hammer drawn from his bag, he broke off the ragged superfluities incrusting what seemed a metallic core; an edge of which he straightway rubbed on his flinty touchstone. It left a yellow trace, as clear and brilliant as heart could desire. Merry drew out a vial of acid, and his hand trembled as he applied it to the yellow trace. The yellow trace vanished—No! it was the dimness that came over the miner's eyes; the yellow trace remained as bright and as beau-

tiful as before. He dipped the corner of the mineral into the acid; it hissed and fumed and bubbled; but the yellow speck became the broader and brighter. It was gold then—‘gold, yellow, glittering, precious gold!’ and Merry—But hark! Snapper howls again, and again tears up the pebbles of the brook! Merry clapped his prize into his sack, and clambered up higher after the dog, admiring at his own happiness in possessing an animal of such marvellous sagacity, perhaps wondering, too, how such an ugly brute should know pebbles of gold from any others, and more especially, how he should know his master was seeking after them.

But Merry the Miner’s mind was too full of more important matters to question or wonder long over the mystery. Snapper had scratched from the shingle another specimen, and one far more satisfactory and valuable than the former—a lump of virgin gold as big as a pigeon’s egg, and looking not unlike one, except that it was marked all over with strange figures and fantastic shapes, so that Merry almost doubted whether it was not a work of art, instead of a freak of nature. But while he was doubting, Snapper scratched again, and Merry picked up another piece;

and then another, and another, in all five or six pieces, though none of them at all comparable in size and value with the two pieces first stumbled on.

But had they been less numerous or less precious than they were, Merry would have rejoiced none the less. He had struck the path of fortune at last, and knew the goal could not now be far off. Too eager to waste time in hunting what he doubted not was a mere subordinate and chance deposit of fragments washed down from above, he gave over the search, to continue his explorations up towards the source of the brook.

As he rose, eager and exulting, his eye fell by chance upon the little valley in which he lived, now far below, and upon his distant and deserted cabin. He sat down and wept. What did gold avail him *now*? He had found the long desired treasure; but his children were lost to him for ever. For this, then, he had bartered them away—squandered the rich treasures of their love, and, worse than all, the rich treasures of honour and virtue, of reputation and happiness, that should have formed their inheritance.

Many a man has felt, and many will feel, like Merry the Miner, when, after a life of

gold-hunting, whether in the field or the counting-room, in the land-office or the stock-market, the prize is won, and *they* lost who might have been good and happy without it.

Bitter were the thoughts of Merry, and he looked upon his prizes with the feelings of a Timon. He cursed them; nay, he snatched them up with a desperate intent to hurl them away; when Snapper fetched another howl, and—and Merry the Miner forgot his anger and his grief. He clapped the golden fragments into his sack, added another piece of gold to his store; and, having now lost sight of his cottage, followed, with Snapper, up the mountain brook, exploring with eager care, and impatient to arrive at its golden springs.

The way was long, the path was wild, and the sun was in the meridian when Merry reached the apparent source of the streamlet; and he was then in the heart of a mountain wilderness as wild, as desolate, as solitary as imagination ever painted. High in air, shut up among ridges that sloped up to heaven all around him, bristled over with black firs or speckled with gray rocks and precipices, no companions but his dog, and the eagles that sometimes swooped down from adjacent peaks to view the invader of their realm,

Merry might have felt the elation inspired by a scene so august and lonely, had not the feeling of the mine-hunter swallowed up every other. His good luck had departed from him; he had trudged miles without finding any further traces of gold, or indeed any thing at all remarkable, save fragments of spar and stalagmitic concretions, in which fancy traced a thousand resemblances to objects he had left in the world behind him, as well as to others that existed only in the world of dreams. These, interesting as they might have proved on another occasion, Merry would now have joyfully exchanged for a single bit of gold, the smallest that miner ever picked out of earth. But the gold had vanished, and Merry arrived at the head of his rivulet only to be persuaded he had arrived in vain.

A deep and narrow ravine, up which he scrambled with infinite labour and pain, and *down* which the feeble and dwindling waters seemed to find it as difficult to flow—for lazily, and with complaining murmurs, they dropped from rock to rock, creeping and moaning among obstructions, over which, it was plain, at other seasons, a torrent came bounding and roaring like a lion after his

prey—its lofty walls growing loftier as the miner advanced, and flinging a gray and smoky midnight over all below, was suddenly terminated by a precipice, from whose inaccessible heights the stream fell in a dreary, ever pattering, but meagre shower, while a still feeble runnel oozed from a chasm in the precipice, as if flowing from a spring in the heart of the mountain.

Upon examining this chasm a little—there came from it a faint, icy breath of air—Merry was surprised to find it the entrance of a cavern—a huge, yawning antre as black as death, and gloomy, and ruinous, and mouldering as a sepulchre of a thousand years. Merry cared not a whit for caverns, great or small; and as the feeble ray of light admitted from the ravine did not penetrate beyond a few feet, and disclosed a formidable labyrinth of rocks and stalagmites covering the watery floor, he felt no great desire to disturb its solemn privacy. But Merry was heated and wearied by his toilsome ascent of the mountain, and the cool air of the cavern tempted him to enjoy a moment of repose. He sat down upon a rock and endeavored with his eyes to fathom its hidden recesses, but in vain. Nothing was to be seen but the

formidable rocks and stalactites, and they all vague, shadowy, and undistinguishable. But the ray of light, imperfectly disclosing the darksome labyrinth, revealed, almost under his feet, another object neither formidable nor repulsive—a little topaz-hued star glistening on the floor, from which Merry eagerly snatched it up, and carried it to the light of day. It was gold—a rounded mass inferior in size only to the pigeon's egg, and bright and pure as gold could be.

THE LEGEND
OF
MERRY THE MINER.

CHAPTER II.

IN a moment the cavern had lost its funereal gloom, and shone upon Merry's imagination a palace of light and loveliness, fit for the residence of the gnome-king. The trunk of a mountain pine, shivered by a tempest, had fallen into the ravine, where it still lay, a magazine of ready-made torches provided for any one willing to enter the mystic abyss.

With the hatchet, which always formed a part of his equipments, Merry easily succeeded in riving off a bundle of resinous splinters. A flint and steel afforded the means of striking a light; and, flambeau in hand, his gun left, as an encumbrance, in the ravine, Merry immediately crept through the tall, narrow fissure, into the cave; though his dog Snapper, daunted by its repulsive appear-

ance, refused to follow him. He remained at its entrance, filling the air with doleful howlings, as his master vanished in the gloom; and with these ominous sounds in his ears, multiplied, and variously uttered, as they were, by the echoes of the cave, Merry bade farewell to his companion and the world of light.

Even with the torch flaming in his hand, Merry's eyes failed to reach the boundaries of the cave, its walls being no where visible except immediately behind him, where they parted away, right and left, from the entrance—itself a blind, twisted gap, perceptible only at the distance of a few feet—to be almost immediately lost in darkness. Nothing, indeed, could be well said to be visible except a few rugged pillars rising here and there among rocks and spars of all imaginable sizes, piled and tumbled together in inconceivable confusion, and presenting such fantastic shapes as both kindled the imagination and struck the spirit with awe. To Merry, who paused for a moment aghast, it seemed as if each rock was composed of animals, or parts of animals, each a congeries of limbs, heads, trunks, skeletons, cemented or incrustated together in one hideous organic mass. Here glared the head of a panther from among the ribs

of an elephant; there an alligator peeped from the back of a horse; here a boa-constrictor writhed under the shattered body of an ox; and there a great sea-fish opened her yawning jaws, in which bears and monkeys made their den. Nay, Merry even fancied that, imbedded in these frightful concretions, he could behold the limbs and heads of human beings, the former crushed and sprawling, the latter staring ghastfully out with eyes of stone.

While Merry paused a moment, confounded by these strange appearances, and doubtful whither to proceed in search of the golden stream, which was now lost among the rocky apparitions, he heard it faintly murmuring in the distance, at a point to which he did not hesitate to direct his steps, and where he had soon the satisfaction to discover it flowing down a broad stair-case of rock, as regular almost as if cut by the hands of man.

Here Merry again paused, nay, recoiled a moment in consternation; for upon that stair-case stood the gigantic figure of a man, grim, shadowy, terrible, his countenance, as far as a countenance could be seen that was, like his whole body, incrustated over with stone, convulsed with some nameless agony, and his attitude, which was that of flight, of flight

arrested by a sudden spell, that had bound his limbs as with fetters of iron, expressive of a deep but majestic despair. A tunic, sustained by a broad baldrick; sandals, or what seemed sandals, upon his feet; and in his hand the massive hilts of a sword, whose blade had long since rotted away, were the only accoutrements on a shape, in whose very nakedness there was something august and commanding.

Merry's hair bristled as he surveyed the stony phantom; but by and by, convinced it was no living creature, and moved by curiosity, he approached, and even mustered courage to touch the unconscious frame. It was, as it seemed, a figure of stone, but how formed Merry the Miner was not learned enough to tell; but as he felt the vast limbs, foully sheeted over with spar, a rough and rigid coat formed by the drippings and deposits of centuries, he could not but fancy a human body was sepulchred within.

Merry the Miner forgot his gold, and his hopes of gold. Wonder and curiosity absorbed his spirit. He thought now only of investigating a mystery so strange and so new, of prosecuting still further a discovery whose first fruits were so astonishing. He as-

cended the wet and mouldering stair-case. Twenty steps brought him to its summit, where stood another colossal figure struggling in the grasp of a third that lay upon its face, half buried under a mound of stalagmite that had grown around it, its arms twined round his legs, its hair, long and flowing like the locks of a woman, trodden under his feet, with which he seemed endeavouring to spurn the prostrate shape away. It was a ghastly picture of terror overpowering the feeble and unmanning the strong, of selfishness converting woman's love and man's devotion into frenzied contention and brutal hate.

But a new spectacle drew Merry's eyes from this unnatural group. The last step of the staircase was ascended, and there yawned upon him a new cave, vaster than that he had left below, and filled with spectres more wonderful and appalling; rank upon rank, crowd upon crowd, multitude upon multitude, they burst upon his view, the stony effigies and relics of pre-Adamitic ages, the remains and representatives of all races that had lived and perished. It was a world of stone—a petrified world; and Merry felt, as the clang of his footsteps awoke the funeral

echoes of the place, and one after one the fearful shapes started into view, that he trod upon accursed ground, among the doomed inhabitants of a demolished sphere.

Were these, then, things of flesh? things that had lived, and breathed, and walked the earth? these things of bulk so enormous, of shapes so strange and fearful? Ay, here they were—creatures that *had* lived, and breathed, and walked the earth—all in their general sepulchre, not clad alone in the ordinary vestures of decay, in bones and ashes, but in form as when they lived, in body and, it seemed, almost in substance, but grown over each with a mantle of stone, a rime of rock, that converted all into monumental statuary. Here they were, all in wild confusion, all flying in terror from a destiny which had, nevertheless, overtaken them, and all expressing, in their positions, the agony of annihilation. It was a fearful picture of fate, a grand and terrible, yet mournful, revelation of the last moment of a world's perdition.

Merry's flesh again crept on his bones; but he remembered all was stone around him, and advanced, looking with mingled fear and admiration upon the varied figures occupying this subterraneous world, where all was left

as in the moment of destruction, save that the rocks which had fallen and covered all with a new firmament, had here and there dropped to the floor, forming piles and mounds that crushed hundreds of animals beneath them, and in other places had poured floods of petrifying moisture that converted groups of bodies into mountains of spar. Here, among strange plants and trees of the primeval forests, whose trunks formed stalactitic pillars supporting the roof, Merry beheld the magnificent monsters first revealed to human eye by the labours of the geologist, though revealed only in fragments—the Mastodon, with his mighty tusks, huge and strong enough to toss a mountain into the air; the Megatherium, with claws to tear up trees, and armour upon his back to sustain them in the fall; the tremendous Dinotherium, with teeth that dredged the bottoms of lakes and rivers, and, hooked to some overhanging rock or tree, supported the watery sluggard in his sleep; the great Saurians,—huge and hideously formed reptiles, to which the crocodiles and anacondas of our own day were as earthworms and lizards; with the primordial horse, ox, rhinoceros, and other animals without number and without name; all huddled

together, and man, their enemy and master, with them, in a confusion of terror that reduced all to equality and fellowship in misery.

Through this vast hall, following the course of the brook, on which he relied to guide him back to the realms of day, Merry pursued his discovery, examining with interest the various shapes on either side. But by and by they ceased to appear: he had reached the end of the Hall of Flight.

A few steps conducted him into another chamber, where his eyes fell upon a sweeter scene. It was a shepherd watching his flocks, all, shepherd and flocks alike, of stone, and all seeming to have passed to death in a dreamy unconsciousness of their fate. Here terror and anguish were no longer seen; and Merry fancied he was about to behold the inhabitants of the ancient world in a better aspect, in their natural state and appearance as when they lived. "Yes," quoth he, well pleased at the prospect—for the universal agony he had passed through chilled him to the heart—"I have seen how they died; I shall now see, perhaps, how they lived."

And so he did; for having proceeded a few yards further, he found himself upon a huge

subterranean plain, whereon were countless hosts of men, with sword and spear, arrow, javelin, and war-club, with horses and chariots, waging a furious battle; in the very midst of which their destiny, it seemed, had come upon them. As they were engaged, so they had perished, each his sword at his fellow's throat, trampling under foot and hoof, crushing with chariot wheels, thrusting with lances, piercing with darts and arrows, raging and destroying. Thus it was with them, even with eternity at their elbow, their world falling to pieces under their feet. Upon the borders of death, they were anticipating his coming; with one foot in the balance of judgment, they were dragging with them the blood of rapine and murder, to weigh them down in condemnation forever.

“Ay!” quoth Merry the Miner, “and so they do in the world above! all busily engaged in cutting short for one another the little moment of life assigned them by nature—all madly eager adding gall and wormwood to the little cup of happiness their destiny allows them—all hot to prove their supremacy over the beasts of the field, by exceeding them in violence and enmity.”

Through this midnight battle-field Merry

made his way among mangled and disfigured corpses, retaining even in stone, with the looks of the dying and of death, vestiges of the passions which impelled them to strife and attended them in slaughter. Here was the fiery youth urged by the love of glory—that love called noble and generous, though it aims at blood, and fills the world with orphans; there the veteran, to whom use had made slaughter an exciting pastime. Here was the soldier fighting for his sixpence; there the great captain leading up a thousand men to die in a ditch, that he might go down to future ages renowned in story. Here was seen the throttle of hate, the grasp of rage and desperation; there the wounded besought quarter which the victor denied, and here the victor, himself at last perishing, seemed to entreat of Heaven the mercy he had denied his fellows; while the contortions of agony and despair spoke the late but unavailing remorse of the dying. In short, it was a battle field, in which Merry the Miner, as he himself hinted in his half muttered apostrophe, saw nothing that he might not have seen in a ‘foughten field’ in the world above.

By and by he had passed it through, glad to escape its shocking spectacles. He then

entered a passage looking like the broad street of a half ruined city, with houses on either side, some overthrown, some sheeted over with spar, but all wild, and antique, and strange-looking, like the buried structures of Herculaneum, or still more the ancient subterranean cities of the East.

Here the first sight that struck Merry's eyes was a knot of ferocious looking men, sitting round a slab of stone, gambling; at least, so they appeared to Merry, to whom the avaricious exultation of one, who held aloft what seemed a bag of coin just won; the despairing looks of a second, who clasped his hands in the frenzy of conscious ruin; the scowl of a third, who seemed also a loser; with the villany of a fourth, who, while appearing to sympathize on one side of his face with the winner, on the other with the losers, was slyly abstracting a second bag of money from the table; were proofs of the nature of their employment not to be mistaken.

Merry saw and felt the moral of the scene. He was struck with the brutal triumph of the winner, whose happiness was the misery of at least one other; with the humiliating grief of that other; with the frowning ferocity of the third man, who looked as if thirsting for

the blood of the victor; above all, with the base roguery of the fourth, who made no difficulty of stealing the treasure he could not otherwise hope to master.

Merry the Miner saw and felt all this; and could, had any one been by, have moralized very prettily on the debasing effects of avarice. But while he saw and felt, and was able to moralize, the very passion he saw thus variously personified, stole into his bosom; and he longed to possess the bags of coin, so temptingly displayed. He forgot he was among the dead of a doomed world, and was again a gold-hunter. He snatched at the bag in the winner's hand; but bag and hand were alike marble. He drew his hammer, and with a blow shattered the arm of the gambler; and down it dropped, with dismal clanging, on the stone floor. Another blow crushed the hand and bag to pieces, and Merry's hopes were gratified. Out rolled upon the floor a nest of antique golden coins, which Merry, after admiring a moment, clapped into his sack, among his other treasures. He then attacked the second bag, and after a deal of hammering, for it was fast cemented to the stone table, succeeded in breaking it also, and seizing its precious contents.

Merry proceeded onward, swelling with hope and joy. He had forgotten his wonder and curiosity about the ancient world, and its strange discovery; his thoughts were now; not of the sins and destruction of its people, but of their wealth, of which he deemed himself the heir apparent.

His next step brought him to a booth or shop, where stood—was it a money-changer, or an old clothesman and pawnbroker? Merry could not tell, for the booth, was half filled up with petrification, which encased the old man up to the middle, and held also a customer, a poor old tattered woman, glued to his shopboard; but it was quite evident the hoary sinner was cheating her—selling her the ragged mantle he held in his hand for twenty times its value, or buying it—if a buyer—at as great a profit.

“How strange and pitiable,” quoth Merry the Miner, “that men should cheat for money—grind, fleece, cozen, rob—nay, rob even the poor!” With these words, he knocked from the shopman’s girdle, where it hung suspended, a purse of gold, the only valuable in the booth which, as far as Merry could discover, the petrified flood had not swallowed up.

The next sight struck him with horror. It

was a footpad rifling the body of a man whom he had just murdered by beating out his brains with a club.

“How vile,” quoth Merry the Miner, “must be that love of gold which drives men to robbery and murder!” Thus venting his indignation, he smote from the robber’s fist the fruits of his double crime, and transferred them to his own pocket.

A few more steps, and Merry found himself in a market, or other public place, where, among a multitude of people chaffering after pennies with as much eagerness as if salvation were in them, sat judges upon tribunals, dealing out justice, and some of them, as Merry thought, dealing it out at a very good price. Certainly, he saw one very patriarchal looking old gentleman fulminating the terrors of the law, with one hand outstretched against an unhappy complainant, whilst the other, extended behind him, was receiving a *douceur* dropped into it by the richer defendant. At another tribunal stood a man, evidently a bankrupt, dragged by clamorous creditors before the tribunal, yet escaping their demands by an oath of destitution, which he confirmed by raising his hands to heaven, thereby disclosing a well crammed purse concealed under his mantle.

“And men will even commit perjury for money!” thought Merry, who, as he helped himself to the wages of corruption and perjury, began to feel somewhat uneasy at these exemplifications of the effects of the love of gold upon human nature. He turned to the market house, and there beheld a father selling his children into slavery, a mother bartering away her daughter for a price.—In short, he saw enough to convince him that man’s god was gold; and that of all gods it demanded the richest sacrifices of its votary—the sacrifice of his head and heart, of his honour, virtue, happiness—nay, of his soul itself.

Merry’s uneasiness increased. “Truly,” quoth he, “if men will do these things for gold, it must be a cursed thing. How know I that it will not enchant *me* also into villainy?” He began to ask himself whether *he* had never defrauded, robbed, murdered, borne false witness, or done other evil for lucre’s sake. It was a great satisfaction to him to be assured he had not, and to believe he never could. Nevertheless, he could not divest himself of a degree of consternation that fastened upon his spirit, while yielding himself to a passion whose debasing effects upon others he saw pictured around him in acts of meanness and iniquity of every grade and dye.

He could not divest himself of his fear; but neither could he divest himself of his covetousness; and he accordingly went on his way, exploring the buried city, and ravishing the treasures of the dead, of which, having prodigious success, he soon collected more than he could carry, or his sack contain; so that he was obliged to empty it twice or thrice on the path, leaving shining heaps, which he designed removing afterwards at his leisure.

His success was the greater for his having, after a time, hit upon a new branch of exploration. He had often looked with a curious eye upon the buildings that bounded the street on either side, huge, strange structures, here lying in ruins, there still standing, but almost lost under thick shrouds of spar. It struck him that if he could by any means make his way into the interior of these houses, he might light upon treasures of much more value than all the purses he could hope to filch from the corpses in the street. Nor was he disappointed; for having at last found houses with penetrable doors, he entered them, looking with awe upon their stony inhabitants, some feasting, or seeming to feast, at rich tables, some sleeping the sleep of death in couches of marble; and with a de-

light that soon banished his awe, upon the rich golden vessels and ornaments, the treasures of the banqueting room, for which there was no longer an owner.

Such visits into different houses enabled him rapidly to increase the number of piles, by which he marked his way along the street; though, in his progress, he sometimes stepped into mansions where nothing was gained but wisdom. Once he entered a huge building, in which he anticipated an unusual store of treasure; but found himself in a prison filled with felons expiating in chains crimes, which, for aught he knew, the lust of pelf had driven them to commit. Another time, he got into a madhouse, where, among other bedlamites raving in stone, was doubtless the usual proportion of cases where the loss of gold, or the fear of losing it, had converted the children of God into gibbering monkeys.

Again, he found himself in a madhouse of another kind, or rather madhouse and prison in one; a hall of legislation, where fools were destroying a nation, and knaves pilfering it, and both parties quarreling upon the question which best deserved the name of patriots.

THE LEGEND
OF
MERRY THE MINER.

CHAPTER IV.

MERRY'S next visit was into a mansion of greater importance than any yet entered. It was a royal palace, the court of a pre-Adamic sovereign; where, among the ruins of his world, his kingdom, his house, sat the piece of hardened clay that had held itself superior to other clay, which it had worried and agonized, trampled, racked, decapitated, according to its sublime will and pleasure, and been allowed to do so by the other clay, the millions of pieces that owned its rule, because, of all, there was not one shrewd enough to conceive the superior convenience of freedom, or having conceived it, who was not willing to sell his thought, and his liberty, for a piece of money. Here sat the monarch surrounded by his court; his generals

who ravaged foreign countries to increase his grandeur, his ministers who plied the besom at home for a similar purpose. Here were his buffoons and parasites, the soft slaves of his pleasure and the instruments of his wrath; his sellers and buyers of office; his corruption-mongers and their customers; his keepers of conscience without conscience, his sages without wisdom, his saints without religion, his friends without love, his servants without faith, prostituted geniuses, bought patriots, rogues, slaves—a mighty herd of servility and corruption. Ay, here they all sat or stood, glorious in the pomp of their golden trappings, which the incrusting waters had not yet hidden entirely from the eye.

Merry the Miner was too good a democrat to be greatly daunted at the sight of a king and court. In truth, he saw nothing so impressive and interesting in king or courtier, as the golden ornaments on their persons.—Thus it must be with the glorious, when the unsophisticated make their acquaintance in the grave. The tomb-rat loves your great man only for his tenderer flesh; and the Arab of the Egyptian catacombs sees nothing in a mummied Pharaoh, but an inflammable back-log for his kitchen fire.

Merry lighted a new pine-knot, and then with eyes that gloated in joy over the sepulchral yet gorgeous assemblage, fell to work in his vocation of plunder. He yielded royalty so much respectful observance as to commence operations on the monarch's person, knocking from his anointed head the golden crown that none remained to honour or envy, and from his jewelled hand the sceptre that was no longer the talisman of authority. To these the insatiate Merry added the chains of gold and diamonds around his majestic neck; when, having despoiled the flinty monarch of every valuable, he turned to his royal consort and progeny, and to his ministers and flatterers, all of whom he in like manner disencumbered of their jewelled trappings.

And now, after an hour or two of labour hard and unremitting—for it was no easy task to detach the precious relics from their crusts of stone—Merry the Miner paused to congratulate himself upon his success. He looked at his piles with joy: there were enough of them to occupy him a day—nay, many days—in removing them from the cave. He clapped his hands, he laughed, he almost danced; he was a happy man, he was a rich

one; "Ay," quoth he, with exultation, "I am the richest man in the world!"

With that, he sat down to rest his weary bones—for, truly, his labour had well nigh exhausted his strength—and to enjoy in prospect the happiness which such store of wealth seemed to assure him. The delight of revery was added to the languor of fatigue; and while his imagination took the airiest flights, a pleasant lassitude stole over every limb. It was a strange spectacle he presented, as he sat in that damp charnel-house, where objects, dimly revealed by his torch, put on a double ghastliness—the living man rejoicing over the treasures and hopes, of which the dead around him spoke the hollow vanity. But Merry thought not of the dead; how could he, whose dreams were of lands and houses—glorious domains spreading around him, with palaces on them, and flocks and herds, and hamlets and villages—nay, towns and cities; for Merry the Miner was already laying his lands out in town-lots, and calculating the profits of the speculation: how could *he* think of the dead, or of death?

No—Merry the Miner troubled himself not at all with the monumental statues around him; but by and by, having at length rested

his bones, and settled his plan for doubling his money at the expense of his neighbours, he bethought him of rising, and removing his treasures forthwith from the cave.

He bethought him of rising, and attempted to do so—but in vain. A sudden palsy had seized upon his body; there was a numbness or stiffness in every joint, and it was increasing every moment. A terrible idea entered his mind; his heart leaped with perturbation—it seemed almost the only muscle capable of motion. He looked down upon his limbs: they were already thickly crusted over with spar, which the humid atmosphere of the cave was depositing around them with fearful rapidity. He felt the cold stone stiffening on his fingers and freezing on his cheeks—He, also, was becoming a petrification—a man of stone, like all around him! His treasures, his darling treasures, attacked by the subtle vapour, had already vanished from his eyes.

But what cared Merry for treasure *now*? Terror and anguish seized upon his spirit; he gathered all his energies into an effort, and struggled furiously to burst his bonds of stone. As well might the wild-goat struggle in the embrace of an anaconda, a fly in the meshes of a spider. The incrustation crackled

around him, and then was firmer than ever: he could neither move hand nor foot: he was a rock, and part and parcel of the rock on which he sat.

Thus a prisoner, a breathing corse, a living fossil, Merry gave himself up to despair, and raved and shrieked, until affrighted at the echoes of his own voice. It seemed, indeed, as they reverberated among the ruined walls of the palace, and through the distant streets, as if all the inhabitants of this petrified world had found their voices, and replied to him with yells as wild as his own. But shrieks and struggles were alike vain; and by and by he found himself deprived of the power even of uttering a cry. The stony concretion was gathering round his throat and jaws, and mounting to his lips; where, though his warm breath had as yet repelled the insidious vapour, it threatened soon to attack him with suffocation. In a few moments, and what would remain of Merry the Miner?

In those few moments, how deep was the agony, how wild the terror, how distracting the thoughts of the unhappy Merry, who now cursed his fate, and now the fatal avarice that provoked it, now thought bitterly of his approaching death, and now still more bitterly

of the long life miserably wasted—wasted in a pursuit which had brought him nothing but wo and ruin. Nothing that was agonizing, nothing that was maddening, but Merry the Miner had it passing through his mind in those moments of imprisonment so strange and fearful.

But the stone still grew around him; and by and by, as the incrusting matter thickened at his mouth and nostrils, he felt that he had but another breath to draw, and then perish.

At that moment, the sound of a trumpet, a single, tremendous note, burst through the cave, and Merry's blood froze with fear. That dreadful note seemed to thrill the dead as well as the living. To Merry's eyes, dim and filming, but not yet darkened, it seemed as if each statue started with fear; he heard, or fancied he heard, the rattling of their sparry garments, and a dull sad moan issuing from their marble lips.

Then there flashed into the cave the appearance of a moving fire, in which approached a figure as of a fallen angel, majestic in mien, terrible yet mournful in aspect, and on his brow the name of the Inexorable, holding in his hand a flaming sword, with which he touched the stony corpses one

by one, pronouncing the words of condemnation; and wheresoever he touched, a flame seemed to spring up within the statue, a lurid, tormenting fire, that shone through it as a lamp hidden within an alabaster vase.

“Thou,”—he cried, with a voice as dreadful and mournful as his visage, touching at the same time the monarch, in whose body the fires immediately appeared—“Thou, because thou didst hold thyself as the Lord of them thou was sent to serve:—Ye”—touching the ministers—“because ye were the tools of his passions, who should have been counsellors of wisdom and goodness; Ye”—to the courtiers—“because ye were idolaters and man-worshippers;” and so on, until he had reached, in his course, the unhappy Merry, who, beholding the sword of the Inexorable thus stretched above *his* head, at last betook himself for aid to a means which, in his distraction, he had not yet thought of—he muttered a prayer, not audibly, for his lips were now sealed, but in the deep recesses of his spirit.

The sword was turned aside; and with the sad and solemn utterance—“He that hath time left to pray, hath yet time to escape the judgment”—the apparition glided away to

resume his judgment of others. The rocky covering at the same moment melted from Merry's body; and he, forgetting his gold, his implements, his torches—forgetting every thing but the terror that infused strength into his liberated limbs, fled from the scene amain. He fled, lighted at a distance by the fires kindled by the Inexorable; whose voice Merry could long hear pronouncing in the street, the prison, and the city, and upon the battle field, the words of doom; “Thou, for thy blood guiltiness! Thou, for thy perjury! Thou, for thy covetousness! Thou, for thy ambition!” at every word setting some enclosed spirit in flames, until the whole cavern gleamed with the lights of hell.

These lights pursued the flying Merry until he had almost reached the outlet of the cavern; when the howlings of his faithful dog directed him to the passage. Dashing through the orifice, and scarcely pausing even to catch up his gun, he fled down the ravine and the course of the brook, running like a madman until he reached at length his own deserted home. He entered it a poorer man than he had left it in the morning; his sack and all the implements of his pursuit having been abandoned in the cave, along

with the fragments of gold he had picked up in the brook, not to speak of the more magnificent treasures gathered in the cave itself.

But if Merry the Miner was now a poorer man, he was also, or at least he thought himself, a much wiser and better one than he had ever been before. Gold-hunting he immediately forswore, as a soul-endangering occupation; he became, moreover, exceedingly devout, and somewhat industrious, having resolved, as he said, to be content with honest poverty for the remainder of his days.

His story, as might be expected, produced no common sensation among his neighbours, some of whom, to Merry's astonishment and grief, (for he told his story for the purpose, and with the expectation, of deterring them from all covetousness,) proposed to him to conduct them to his wondrous cave; where, for such a prize as he had abandoned, many of them swore they were willing to face not only his devil, for so they contemptuously called the condemning spirit, but all the devils that were ever heard of. This Merry very resolutely refused to do: he had taken a vow never to go nigh the place again, putting himself in the way of temptation; it was as much as his soul was worth. They then

bade him instruct them where to find it. This, also, Merry positively declined. Strong in his newborn virtue, he was determined no unlucky sinner should, through his means, be put in the way of perdition; he would save the souls of his friends, he declared, as well as his own.

Upon this, his neighbours instituted a search through the mountains, in hopes of discovering the cave; but after several weeks of fruitless exploration, gave up the attempt in despair, some of them revenging their failure on Merry by pronouncing him a lunatic and dreamer, and declaring that his whole story, his account of the cave, the treasures, the petrified bodies, the adjudging angel, was a mere fiction of a distempered brain.

As for Merry himself, he little regarded the imputation, but remained at home, practising those virtues of industry and devotion that seemed to prove him an altered man, until—sorry I am to say it, but so the legend reports of him—he grew tired of them. Whether it was that he found honest poverty by no means so agreeable or profitable as he hoped to prove it—that the devotion begot by fear is not in reality of the most perdurable

species, or that the impression of his terrible adventure was naturally lessened by time, it seemed that he, by and by, began to neglect his cornfield, to be an irregular and unfrequent visiter at the religious meetings, which he had for a while faithfully attended, and was again, after a time, seen on his solitary rambles among the mountains.

Yes, Merry the Miner was once more seen with dog and gun bending his way towards the hills; Merry the Miner had forgotten his religion and his vow, and returned to his original love and ancient passion. He had thought upon the matter, and he thought a happy thought. The cave was accursed and forbidden ground, to be sure, with all its mysterious treasures; but the brook that rolled from it, bearing coins and jewels, to be scattered unregarded on its bed—there was nothing unholy, nothing perilous in the brook: why should not Merry the Miner lay claim to its unforbidden riches?

At this thought, Merry the Miner was conquered; he snatched his gun, he called his dog, and set out in quest of the brook. That brook, however, to his surprise and consternation, was no where to be found. There were a thousand brooks rolling down the

mountain, but in none could Merry discover the singular runnel of the cave. In the agitation of his mind both while going and returning from the cavern, he had forgotten to take any note of the path by which he had reached it; and now the place of the brook, and the features that distinguished it from others, were alike forgotten. Had he lost it then? was he to be denied even the possession of its little treasures?

Merry the Miner waxed wroth with his hard fortune, and took another vow; he swore he would find that brook again, if he sought it to his dying day.

And this vow, it is believed, he religiously kept. Year after year, he was seen wending his solitary way up the mountains, exploring every little stream, every foamy torrent, every dried up channel, with an eager, hopeful eye. Year after year, the search was continued, with the same eagerness, the same hope, the same ill fortune. His dog died with old age; Merry himself grew palsied with years; but still, day by day, his thin gray hairs were seen fluttering in the breeze, as he tottered along the mountain paths with zeal, as in his better years, in quest of the golden brook and perilous cavern.

How long the quest continued, and when or how it ended, no one ever knew. Merry at last vanished from men's eyes, and was seen no more stealing like a ghost among the woods and hills: but what had been his fate could be only conjectured. Some few years after he disappeared, a skeleton was found by a party of hunters in a desolate place among the mountains. It was generally believed to be that of the poor gold-hunter, who had perished in some unknown way in his unfriended rambles.

Others there were who rejected the common belief. According to them, Merry the Miner had again lighted on his long sought rivulet, had again entered his mystic cave; and would there, perhaps, be discovered by some future adventurer, a man of stone like the shapes around him.

A TALE
OF
A S N A G.

CHAPTER I.

EVERY body remembers the complimentary admission of the Englishman in relation to the Mississippi—that it was a very fine river for a *new country*; a declaration which is, however, only remembered to be laughed at as an excellent joke, illustrative of the illiberal, all-decrying spirit of so many British travellers in America. The jest would not have been so obvious, had the traveller added that “the Mississippi would have been a much finer river if in an *old country*,” for he would have then spoken a truth not to be denied by any informed and reflecting mind. It is only in a mountainous country—the only *old* portion of a continent, as every one with the least tincture of geological science knows—that rivers appear in their true grandeur and

beauty. Immensity of expanse and endless leagues of length, are as nothing, without the accompaniments of noble scenery along the banks. The Amazon and the Nile, ploughing their way through flat deserts of mud and sand, are but overgrown, unromantic ditches, from which the traveller longs to escape, to exchange their gigantic tameness for the smallest brooks chattering among cliffs and foaming over precipices. It is more to his magnificent banks than to the historic associations connected with them, that father Rhine owes his supremacy over all the rivers of Europe; and the same cause—the glorious assemblage of hills that follow him almost to the ocean—has elevated the Hudson into a similar pre-eminence among the navigable rivers of the United States, nearly all of which flow, for two-thirds of their length, through a level alluvion of their own forming. Of such a character is the Mississippi, a dull monster, winding his sluggish way through a wilderness of bog and forest, and often swelling above it. When Nature, in some new act of creation, has heaved up the reeking valley a few thousand feet higher, and studded it with peaks and promontories, with chains of Alps and Andes, the Father Water

will be worthy of the admiration it can now claim only as being the finest canal for commercial purposes in the whole world.

But, destitute of beauty, of every element of the romantic and picturesque, as the Mississippi really is, it must be confessed that it possesses many remarkable features of interest, and that the impression it leaves on the traveller's mind is deep, strong, and abiding. Its very deformity becomes, after a time, impressive; and the imagination is stirred by the desolation that haunts its borders—those banks of mouldering clay, bristling with dead trees, or tumbling under the weight of the green forests they bear with them pell-mell into the flood—those never-ending groves of cottonwoods springing from the flats—those walls of willows sagging to and fro in the current, in imitation of the more formidable snags and sawyers that vibrate in deeper water, hard by—those verdant pillars, the ruins of branchless trees matted over with ivies and peavines, jutting from protruding banks—those long festoons of Spanish moss swinging from the boughs, like cobwebs spun by Brodignagian spiders—those rafts of drift-timber lodged upon the low islands; in short, the thousand other features that mingle

into monotony along the whole course of the river from the Ohio to the sea.

The first effect of the Mississippi on the mind of the traveller ascending it—the Coast, or region of plantations, once left behind—is undoubtedly weariness, if not even disgust. Its scenery, varied only by alternations of river and *chute*—the one wide, proud, majestic, the other narrow, with a fierce and turbulent flood—by windings and contortions that exclude all distant prospects, and make one feel as if in a kind of moving prison—oppresses and almost stupifies the spirit. A feeling of exile, of exclusion from the world, preys upon it; and melancholy creeps over every thought. The solitudes become more solitary; the cottonwoods rise in double gloom; the boughs and the tree-tops, as you brush by them round some projecting point, rustle in sadness; and the gush of the river has in it something sullen and sorrowful.

It is then, amid these solitudes, that the voyager begins to feel an interest in the river. A species of superstition steals into his mind, and gradually endows the flood with vitality. He is no longer floating along a mere water-course; he feels as if resting on the bosom of some sublime monster, which heaves under

his weight, but with no sympathy for his feeble human yearnings. In all common rivers, a little poetic feeling enables one to find something like sentience and congeniality in their waters. One can fancy that a bubbling brook rejoices with him; that a river, dashing gaily along over bright pebbles and sands, ripples up to his feet as if with the sportful inclinations of a living creature; or, if his mood be darker, he can discover in the sounds the echoes of his own plaintive murmurs. At least, if we do not think so, we act as if we felt it, and rejoice or murmur with ordinary waters as with a friend. But there is no feeling of companionship in the Mississippi. A few days upon his bosom, and we feel ourselves unworthy his regards; we laugh or mourn, and the monarch of rivers passes on with majestic unconcern. He is too great for friendship; he was made for reverence, for fear, for awe; feelings which creep, one after the other, into the mind, and subdue it.

And then comes the thought of his prodigious length, of the vast volumes of element collected from the four quarters of the wind, and borne, with the wreck and ruins of mountain, prairie, and forest, and of all living things that peopled them, to the Mexican sea,

which, half filled up by him already, he is destined, sooner or later, to convert into dry land. That withered branch floating by may have been torn from a fir on the ridge of the Chippewyan; that quivering log flourished once, perhaps, a noble pine, on the top of the Pennsylvania Alleghanies or the Unikas of North Carolina; that bundle of grassy weeds was a sheaf of wild rice from the neighbourhood of the Lake of the Woods; and that stalk of prickly pear has wounded the foot of the hunter on the plains of Mexico.

One thinks of his boundless extent, and looks upon his surface for the evidences of his boundless power. There is a treacherous calmness over it all; the noisy billows, the merry ripples, that animate common rivers, are here seldom seen. The Mississippi flows along like a river of oil or lava, 'still-vexed,' not agitated, a succession of secret whirlpools, of sucks and eddies that boil below, with scarce a mark of their fury visible on the surface. It is a flood that seems to be constantly convulsed—but convulsed like a strong-hearted sufferer, who conceals his throes in his own bosom, bearing a placid countenance even when the turmoil within is greatest. One cannot look long at the Mis-

Mississippi, and wonder why so many powerful swimmers who have fallen into it, have sunk, never again to rise.

In a word, the Mississippi is the most august of rivers, and few men can ascend it without paying, in some mode and at some time or other, the homage of awe. I have often, in the gloom of evening—for at that hour a double solemnity rests upon the scene—watched its effects on the minds of my fellow-voyagers—men of all characters, grave and gay, the boisterous and the thoughtful—thronging the boiler-deck of our goodly steamer, all engaged in their several amusements. The cards (wo's the word!) rattle on the table, (if a table be there,) the jest goes round, prankish tricks are played, songs sung, and merry stories told; all is jollity and laughter. But by and by, as the evening darkens on, some one more contemplative than the rest casts his eyes upon the tide, forgets the mirth around him, and is subdued to reverential awe. He calls the attention of those near him to some customary object—a great tree gliding along, a sawyer rising to the surface, a raft collected at the head of an island, a bank falling in, a torrent whirling from a chute, a distant steamboat flashing

down like the wind, an eddy boiling up from below, or a whirlpool sucking down a floating bough—all common-place and every-day objects, but all equally significant of the power of the great river: they look on, and also forget the song and jolly story. Others imitate them, one by one; and presently all eyes are fixed upon the river, all lips are for awhile silent, all breasts filled with vague reverence. Such is the tribute that human nature—often unconsciously—pays to the Mississippi.

It is in those serious evening moments that men, who have voyaged often and long on the Mississippi, and stored their memories with the thousand dismal legends of disaster with which its history is fraught, feel most inclined to unlock their stores for the benefit of their neighbours. They are then sure of listeners, and of listeners in the right frame of mind. The solemn feeling awakened by the river itself, is doubly increased when we listen to the tales of tragedy, now associated with almost every point of its navigation.

Of these stories I have heard, and could record enough to fill a volume; and, indeed, I once had some thoughts of venturing before the world with such a publication, not doubt-

ing but that the nature of the subject and the name—" *Steamboat Chronicle*, or a History of Disasters by Steam on the Mississippi,"—would ensure great success to the undertaking; but upon informing a bookseller of my design, he assured me the work would not do. "There is no occasion for it," said he; "men that are curious about steamboat accidents on the Mississippi, have but to refer to the daily papers, each of which is a history—or each of which, at least, contains a history, a never-ending history, of steamboat disasters, published *one chapter a-day!*" My bookseller was right, and I was convinced. I leave the subject to be handled, as usual, by its daily historians.

It was my fate, however, to hear, on one of the occasions spoken of, a story of a remarkable catastrophe, a tale of a Snag, which, I believe, has never made its way into any newspaper; for which reason, and because it is in some respects very different from the common run of "Deplorable Accidents," I think it worthy of being laid before the reader.

A TALE

OF

A SNAG.

CHAPTER II.

THE narrator was a very odd looking and oddly behaved personage—an Englishman, as he took occasion to assure his fellow-travellers, and a commercial traveller or agent, as I suspected, though of that he himself said nothing. When and where he got into the boat I never knew. I did not observe him until the day he thought fit to leave us; and then it was at the dinner table, where he was suddenly made conspicuous by the act of a Red River Kentuckian—that is to say, a Kentuckian who had migrated a few years before to the Red River country—who, being seated opposite to him at table, drew all eyes upon the gentleman, on whom, during the previous five minutes, his own had been fastened, by exclaiming with much earnestness and

energy—"Stranger! I don't want to hurt your feelings—but you are the ugliest man that was ever turned out of the workshop of creation!"—a salutation which he concluded by a thump on the table that set dishes and cutlery in commotion.

"Sir-r-r!" sputtered the gentleman, in wrath and confusion, "if you mean to insult me —"

"By no means," quoth the son of Red River, with a gracious nod; "but the thing was on my mind, and I couldn't help telling you so." With which explanation, which was doubtless meant to be, and was by the speaker himself considered, a sufficient apology for the liberty he had taken, he fell to work on his dinner; leaving the unlucky Englishman to digest the observation, and the merriment it excited among all at the table, as he could. The poor fellow was wofully put out, looking daggers and ratsbane, now at the man who had insulted him, now at those who laughed loudest or stared hardest; and, at last, his rage or confusion becoming insupportable, started up to leave the table; when the Kentuckian, who was at the bottom a very amiable personage, perceiving his distress, rose up in like manner, and stretching his hand across the table in the most friendly

way in the world, exclaimed, "I tell you what, partner, I did not mean to hurt your feelings no how; but if you think I've insulted you, I ask your pardon, and there's my hand on it. I didn't know you were a foreigner, or I should have bewar'd the British lion."

"Hall right!" ejaculated the stranger, looking vastly relieved, and grinning under the friendly gripe of the apologist; "hit's all right sir, and there's no offence. But I must say, sir, you Americans, sir, are the greatest quizzes in the world, sir; yes sir, hods bobs, or my name ha'nt Sniggins, sir."

Upon which, with a he-he-he, Mr. Sniggins sat down again to his rations, which he appeared to discuss with infinite relish.

This little incident has nothing to do with the Tale of the Snag which I am about to chronicle; but it was important, inasmuch as it introduced Mr. Sniggins to the notice of all on board, and, through him, made us acquainted with the aforesaid story; which he would perhaps never have told, being obviously an uneasy, timorous, jealous-pated man, who would have kept aloof from all on board the steamer, had he been left to himself. However offended, as he seemed to be at first, by the Kentuckian's extraordinary greeting,

it was plain the apology had set all right, and won his heart into the bargain. From that moment until the hour of his leaving the boat, which happened the ensuing evening, he became quite a bustling facetious personage, making himself very merry on the subject of the national traits of the Americans, among which he was pleased to reckon as the chief, a villanous propensity to quiz and bamboozle foreigners, particularly Englishmen. It was to this propensity he attributed the Kentuckian's attack: "The gentleman," he said, "knew he was an Englishman—any one might know that—he thanked God he bore the mark of the freeborn Briton on his brow; and the gentleman thought he might get up a little bit of fun at his expense. But he was no Johnny Raw—he had been in the land before, (this was not even his first appearance on a Mississippi steamer;) he knew the Americans, and he was not to be humbugged, no, not he; gentlemen who tried that thing with him, would find it was—all around his hat."

Now, as Mr. Sniggins was no beauty, his person being small, and the several parts somewhat awkwardly put together; his visage, too, uncommonly beefy and rubicund, with a wide mouth, a preposterous nose, pro-

truding eyes of oyster-shell hue, that had a suffering, suffocating look, a very oddly wrinkled brow, surrounded by short lint-white hair of bristling quality, that looked on his ruddy poll like the pale glory round the head of a painted martyr; I am not altogether certain that the Kentuckian was not speaking his true mind and honest opinion, when he pronounced him the ugliest person he had ever looked upon. But Mr. Sniggins satisfied himself that the whole was a quiz; he knew the Americans, and they *would* quiz English travellers: the present attempt of the Kentuckian was but a small one; he could tell instances of a much more extraordinary character, and one in particular—a most astounding case—where a whole steamboat's crew, passengers, hands, and all, had entered into a conspiracy to bamboozle him, under circumstances, and at a time, which would seem to have made a jest the last thing that rational beings would have thought on. It was an amazing proof of the incorrigible propensity of Americans to bamboozle Englishmen; and, as such, he would relate it.

It was the dusk of evening, and the steamer was struggling against the fierce current in the bend of the river below Mem-

phis, at which place Mr. Sniggins was resolved to end his voyage. He had followed his friend, the Kentuckian, to the boiler-deck, where, as usual, remarkable cases of boiler-burstings, burnings, snaggings, &c. were told; some of them, as it appeared, *too* remarkable for Mr. Sniggins, who—if the teller happened to fix his eyes upon him during the course of the story—commonly expressed his incredulity (for he really seemed to believe half the stories were invented merely to quiz him) by an expressive grin, and a still more expressive sweep of his finger round his beaver.

“Hall humbug, gentlemen; can’t humbug me!” he exclaimed with great dignity, after listening to a dozen or more very credible anecdotes. “Tell you a better case of bamboozling, attempted at my expense on this here hidential river, but no go: shall remember it to my dying day; would have sent an account of it to Blackwood or the Monthly Magazine, but was principled against writing about Americans;—cause why?—Americans too techy—tell truth of ’em, fall in a passion; telling lying complimen’s, nobody cares!”

Mr. Sniggins looked around him with a Pyrrhonical smile, drew forth a red and yellow handkerchief, blew his nose, restored the

handkerchief to his coat pocket and then began his story.

"Gentlemen have heard of the steamer *Samson Hagonistes*? Nice boat, first class steamer——"

"Ay," cried one of the gentlemen present, "I remember her; she blew up somewhere down the river, and went to Jericho, with all hands, four years ago."

Mr. Sniggins took off his hat, swept his hand round it once or twice, with a look half smiling, half impatient; and then exclaimed—

"There it is! Americans will make believe black's white, and white black; no mercy on a poor Englishman! No sir," he added, with much importance, "the *Samson Hagonistes* did *not* blow up, down the river, four years ago; but was snagged, *up* the river, seven years ago! Know all about it, sir; was in her when she was snagged and lost; will remember her to my dying day."

"Well," said the passenger who had interrupted him, looking very well satisfied with the correction; "if you were in her, you must know. But I have some kind of notion she blew up."

"Snagged, sir, hawfully snagged," said

Mr. Sniggins; "was in her, as I said, and know all about it, and intend to tell you all about it; though it isn't the snagging I care so much about; it was the humbug that followed after—the attempt at humbug, (for it was no go,)—the attempt made to cheat me into a disbelief of the evidence of my own senses—a most stupendous hattempt, sir! It was on the 23d day of May, just seven years ago, when I took passage in the Samson Hagonistes, at New Horleans bound for Louisville. First time I was ever on the Mississippi, but had been in the country before, and knew the people. Fine set of passengers, but sad wags, had no mercy on me—told me lies all day long, and wanted me to put them in my journal. (Kept a journal then, but took care what I put in it; never meant to print—kept my observations to gratify Mrs. Sniggins.) One gentleman told me it was these here hidetical cottonwood trees along the river that produced the famous short-staple Mississippi cotton—no conscience in the gentleman! Another would have had me believe a great troop of turkeys I saw on a sand-bank, were nothing more than turkey-buzzards. Told him he was a buzzard himself, and then hasked his pardon, as he fell

into a passion. *Was* a little humbugged about one matter: There was a gentleman on board, Mr. Jones, of some place up the river, at the mouth of the Yellow Stone or Columbia, don't remember which, but said it was a fine country for raising cattle and horses. Well, Jones became my friend, and was a very good fellow, and I liked him; only he swore too hard, and *would* gamble all day long and sometimes all night. He persuaded me that a young bear, which somebody had tied to the stove-pipe on the hurricane deck, was of the domesticated species, and would play like a kitten; and I went to play with it, and it clawed me, and tore a new pair of drab breeches I had on all to pieces, and scared me, you've no idea! Well, Jones acknowledged that *was* a humbug, as there was no domesticated species of bears whatever; but he was sorry for it, and asked my pardon, and we became very good friends; and he helped me to discover and counteract the tricks the other passengers were trying to put upon me."

"Well, gentlemen," continued Mr. Sniggins, "we proceeded on our voyage; nothing of consequence occurring until the night of the 4th of June, when we got to a dangerous

place in the navigation, as Jones told me, in the 'Earthquake Country;' which is somewhere above, where the river is so full of snags and halligators."

Here a young traveller interrupted Mr. Sniggins, to assure him there were no alligators so high up the river. Mr. Sniggins touched his hat with a deprecating look; and the other passengers interfered, bidding the youth hold his tongue, as he knew very well that alligators *were* found in the Earthquake Country; while the Kentuckian desired him to remember how common they were in the Salt River of Kentucky.

"Yes," said Mr. Sniggins, triumphantly; "I remember, Jones told me all about them Salt River halligators, and that they were so tame you could see a dozen of 'em at a time snoozing at any tavern door on the river. Well, gentlemen," he continued, resuming his narrative, "it was the night of the 4th June, and we were in the Earthquake Country. I went to the captain, and inquired if all was safe; and being assured all was well enough, and no fear of bursting or snagging, I crept to my berth to sleep, being very drowsy; for I had been up all the preceding night in consequence of Jones telling me he thought there

was something wrong in the boilers; though, as he acknowledged next morning, he was entirely mistaken, and had himself slept quite soundly all night.

“ When I got into my berth, the passengers, and my friend Jones among them, were at the tables in the cabin, playing Brag and Old Sledge, and all that sort of thing—that is, gambling; and, what with scolding, swearing, whistling, laughing, and quarrelling, they kept up such a din that I found it impossible to sleep. Bore it awhile very patiently, waiting till 10 o’clock, when the rules of the boat, which were hung up in frames about the cabin, required all playing to be put an end to. But 10 o’clock came, and the gentlemen played on. Was obliged to remind them that the hour had passed; no go, no effect, except to make them laugh, and bid me mind my own business. I threatened, at last, to call the captain to enforce the rules of the boat. Upon this, they all got up, saying that if I wished them to cease playing, why, certainly, as I was a foreigner, they would do so to please me; but they advised me, if I valued my safety, to get out of my berth and dress myself; or, if I would not do that, by all means, not to fall asleep. ‘The truth is,’ said my

friend Jones, 'we are now in a very dangerous place, in the thick of the snags—the earthquake of 1812 having tumbled all the woods into the river; and besides, it is a dark, cloudy night, and the pilot is a hard-drinking character.' Other gentlemen all joined in, said Jones spoke nothing but the truth, and swore it was their uneasiness, their fear of going to bed while in so dangerous a place, that kept them up gambling so late; for why, they would not go to bed, and they must kill time somehow. Jones asked me if I had a life-preserver, advised me to tie my trunks to ash logs for buoys, if I had any thing valuable in them, and then told me doleful stories of accidents by snagging that had happened in this very part of the river; and the others all did the same thing: never heard so many dreadful stories in my life. Didn't believe 'em, though; thought they wanted to quiz me, and told 'em so, and they went away, hoping I would be none the worse for my unbelief. They left the cabin, declaring they would be near the boats in case of accident.

"I thought they were fibbing, but was a little uneasy for awhile, and then fell sound asleep—great fool for doing so; got to dreaming of the last story they had told me—a most

hateful one; and, as I heard afterwards, quite true: 'twas of a steamer that was snagged up in the Earthquake Country, somewhere near where we then were; 'twas night, the mate had just gone into the fore-castle to turn in, when the snag—a tremendous big one—struck the boat, pierced the fore-castle, took the mate, just as he was fetching a wide yawn, in the mouth, and, 'orrible to relate, came out at the nape of his neck; in which condition he was borne by the snag clear through the deck, twelve feet, and left struggling in the air like a fish strung by the gills to a pole. That was the story. Hateful accident! never hear of such things in Hengland.

“Well, gentlemen,” continued Mr. Sniggins, warming with the story, “I dreamed of seeing the mate sticking on the snag, and was waked up with fright. Woke up in good time; heard an 'orrid noise on the decks—squealing, yelling, swearing; and then, slam-bang—can't describe it; thought we was running over another steamboat, there was such a grinding, and crashing, and cracking, and tossing topsy-turvy, and I don't know what: heard people scream, ‘A snag! a snag!’ and knew all about it. Jumped out of berth; didn't know what I was about; pick-

ed up clothes and trunks, ran out on the gallery; found steamer sinking by the stern, going down like a stone; another steamer alongside, people jumping into her; gave a jump, too—fell short—caught by the rail—knocked a tooth out; man drowning caught me by the leg—kicked him loose—clambered up—tumbled over a wood-pile—don't know what happened—great crowd about me—somebody bled me—lost senses—put to bed; sound sleep all night—woke in the morning, and found Jones standing by, looking at me, and asking how I did. Jumped up quite lively, but all over sore; thanked God to find him alive; asked how many had been saved?—saw a whole heap of 'em: all laughed, and Jones said, I was out of my head. 'No,' said I, 'I am well enough; glad to find so many saved—what an 'orrid accident!' 'What accident do you mean?' said Jones, looking at me, I never was looked at so in my life. 'The snag!' said I, 'that 'ideous snag, that sunk us! 'ow lucky there was another boat to pick us up! quite a nice snug boat—what's her name?'

"Gentlemen!" cried the narrator, here looking round upon his deeply interested auditors, with a martyr-like shrug and twist of the

mouth—"would you believe it? My friend Jones wanted to quiz me heven *then*! He—he—you won't believe it!—he assured me, upon his soul—yes gentlemen, he tried to make me believe, we had *not been snagged at all*! Yes, gentlemen; and the others all joined him, swearing point-blank, (I never did see gentlemen commit perjury so coolly,) that nothing had happened to our boat at all, except running into a bank once in the night, from which we soon backed into deep water. They swore there had been *no* snagging, *no* drowning, *no* sinking, *no* jumping of crew and passengers into another boat; they swore I was still in the Samson Hagonistes, steaming up the Mississippi, fourteen miles an hour! They swore this, gentlemen! they *all* swore it: heven then, hafter that dreadful haccident, they—was there ever such a people?—they thought of nothing but bamboozling me! I showed 'em my bruises, (my head was all broke and tied up,) my shattered tooth, my bandaged arm; and they—what do you think they said? Why, that—(you'll scarce believe me!) that I had jumped out of my berth in my sleep, broke my head and tooth over the table, and knocked my senses out; and that they had bled me to bring me to life; in

short, they swore that the whole affair of the snagging was a chimera—that I had *dreamed it!*

“In short, gentlemen,” added Mr. Sniggins, who could not sufficiently convey his wonder at the extraordinary perversity of his former fellow-voyagers,—“they conspired against me, all of them, the crew and passengers of the Samson Hagonistes; and even those of the boat that had picked us up, united in the same story. The captain of the latter (I don’t know his name,) had, to humour the joke, given place to the master of the Samson, who swore to me, with brazen effrontery, that the boat was *his* boat, the aforesaid Samson Hagonistes,—that the strange passengers (that is, the passengers of the second boat,) were persons he had taken up at a village in the night; and these gentlemen swore the same thing,—they were all leagued against me.

“The quiz—that is, the attempt, for it never succeeded—became hintolerable. My friend Jones was the honly man who admitted (and that in secret) that it *was* a quiz: and but for him, I believe I should have gone distracted among them. Never was man so argued out of his senses! Argument failing,

they even tried to ridicule me into belief of the preposterous humbug; never was man so furiously laughed at! In short, the thing was hinsupportable, I could stand it no longer; and feeling myself growing stronger and stronger every hour, and finding that my friend Jones was about to go ashore at a village which we reached about mid-day, I resolved to land with him, to escape what I now considered the grossest himposition and persecution. Ashore, accordingly, I went: and there," continued the narrator with emphasis, "my friend Jones pointed out to me, on the wheel-house of the retreating steamer, the last and most astonishing proof of the pains my tormentors had taken to make their humbug as perfect as possible. I saw, gentlemen,—what do you think,—what *can* you think, I saw upon that wheel-house?"—cried Mr. Sniggins, panting for breath.

"Why," cried the youth who had once before interrupted him, "you saw the name of the steamboat, I suppose—What was it?"

"No, sir," cried the traveller, opening his eyes to express the intensity of his astonishment, "they had daubed her name out, and painted over it, in large letters, the name of the *Samson Hagonistes* ! !"—

“Passengers for Memphis!” roared the clerk of the steamer, as, at that moment, our hissing vessel struck the shore. Mr. Sniggins vanished from our eyes, leaving all in a stupor of admiration. The next instant he was seen on the bank, with a porter shouldering his luggage, and leading the way up the bluff. The boat had pushed off; Mr. Sniggins turned round to wave a courteous farewell. His countenance, radiant with self-approving sagacity, said, as plainly as countenance could, “You see, gentlemen, I am not the person to be humbugged!”

There was no standing that look: it broke the charm that had kept his hearers dumb with astonishment; and a roar of laughter, such as added a year to the life of every soul on board, it was so loud, so mirthful, so care-killing, bore the farewell of his late companions to the retreating Mr. Sniggins.

MY FRIENDS
IN
THE MADHOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

A VISIT TO THE ASYLUM.

I HAVE always been of opinion that madmen are by no means so mad as the world usually supposes them—an idea which, if not originally impressed, was strongly confirmed on my mind by the conduct of a lunatic in a certain Asylum, in which it was my chance to be a rambler and a looker-on, at a period when the visiting physician, was going his rounds, with some five or six score of medical students at his heels. Following this long train of philanthropists through the wards, I enjoyed (if so it could be called) an opportunity of looking into many cells, thrown open only to the medical attendants and their pupils, upon the miserable tenants—victims

of mania in every form—whose appearance sometimes shocked, and always saddened, the beholder.—Truly, we know nothing of the extraordinary structure and tremendous energies of the human mind, that grandest and most amazing of created things, until we see it in ruins.

A more agreeable—or to speak correctly, less repulsive—spectacle, at least to me, was twice or thrice presented in the persons of lunatics whose malady was of such a harmless character that they, instead of being confined in cells, were allowed to ramble up and down the wards as they pleased, talking with the officers of the Asylum, sometimes even assisting them in ministering to their fellow maniacs, and, above all, enjoying themselves, in conversation with such visitors as chance threw in their way.

One of these unfortunates, seen on the present occasion for the first time, was a young man of spirited and humorous deportment, who betrayed much satisfaction at the appearance of the physician, shook him heartily by the hand, gave him, without waiting to be asked, his wrist to feel and his tongue to inspect, and then demanded, with a very business-like nod of the head, “Well now, Doctor, what

do you think of me ? Capital, eh ? quite right in the upper story ?”

“Oh, certainly, John,” replied the physician—“doing extremely well.” With which he seemed disposed to pass on. But John was not so easily satisfied.

“None of your quaker answers, if you please, Doctor,” quoth he, with a knowing grin; “answer to the point, like a gentleman, and don’t fob me off like one of your regular madmen. I say, Doctor, what’s your ideas concerning the state of my cerebellum? Just say the word—am I mad or not?”

“Mad ? Oh, no, certainly,” said the physician, smiling; “nobody could think such a fine funny fellow as John mad.”

“I’ll be hanged if you don’t, though !” said John, with the utmost coolness, “and I wonder why you can’t say so, like an honest fellow. But I say, Doctor,” he continued, observing the physician about to pass on a second time, “just answer me another question or two, before you go. All these young gentlemen here are young doctors, a’n’t they ?”

To this the doctor replied in the affirmative; whereupon John jumped upon a chair, and looking round him with an air of comical solicitude, exclaimed—“Well now,

while there's so many of you present, all doctors, just let's settle the question by vote. I say, gentlemen," he cried, "the Doctor thinks I am mad, and I think I am *not*: Put it to vote among you; for, being doctors, and such a heap of you, you'll know all about it.—Here I am, gentlemen, John Jones by name;—mad, or not mad?"

To this demand several of the young men answered smilingly, in the words of their preceptor, by assuring John he was not mad.

"Gammon!" said John, "or why don't you *let me out*? But I tell you what, my gentlemen, you may think me as mad as you please: all that I can say is, I think you just as mad as myself, and—hang it—a great deal madder; and, what's more, I can prove it."

"Very well, John," said the physician, who seemed amused by the oddity of his patient, and willing to humour him a little; "if you can prove that, I shall clap them into the cells forthwith, and make you their keeper."

"It's a bargain," said John, turning to the students; whom he addressed in the following terms, grinning all the time, as if with the triumph of anticipated victory.

"Here you are, a hundred or more able-bodied young fellows, inhabitants of a coun-

try where labour and industry, always in greater demand than professional science and dignity, always secure the rewards which science does not—the independence and wealth, which are the great aims of every American. I hold you mad, first, because you have deserted the fields you would have passed useful and happy lives in tilling, to enter upon a professional career in which you will, if you don't starve outright, remain poor unlucky drones for life: secondly, because, if you *must* have a profession, you have chosen the worst of all professions in the world—the poorest in emolument, the lowest in influence, the least in dignity. Had you chosen the law, you might have gabbled and cheated your way to fortune, and to Congress into the bargain; with divinity, you might have married rich wives and preached bad sermons, in religious contentment to your dying days. Whereas, as doctors, supposing you don't prove, from sheer incompetency, public murderers, you will waste your days in works of humanity, for which you are only half paid, and not thanked at all; besides being deprived of all those side means of making a fortune, which belong to the other professions. Thirdly and finally, you are mad, because, if

you *will* be doctors, you yet go to the trouble and expense of studying the art; when the world, and the American world in particular, would have liked you just as well, and, indeed, a great deal better, if you had begun to slash and physic, without any study or preparation whatever. Men must be mad, indeed, who will study physic, when they can make a fortune three times as fast by quackery !”

With these words, delivered I knew not whether most to the edification or diversion of the young doctors, who straightway took their departure in search of new patients, honest John descended from his chair, and, clapping his hands into his pockets, began to saunter up and down the passage, whistling Yankee Doodle with great vigour and execution.

I felt desirous of making the acquaintance of a lunatic so very methodical in his madness, and accordingly stepped up to honest John, and assuring him that his oration had quite convinced me of his sanity, and the utter distraction of his scientific hearers, begged to be informed to what cause he owed his incarceration in that abode of the crack-brained.

“ Oh,” said John, grinning with delight,

(for he was vastly flattered by my complimentary address,) and looking volumes of sagacity—"we have a mode of accounting for it here among us. The world is composed of wise men and madmen, the latter being in the majority—ay, sir, hang it! a hundred to one, undoubtedly. Well, sir, what can a few wise people do among a myriad of mad ones? In short, sir, the mad fellows have got the upper hand of *us*, the wise ones, and—here we are in Bedlam!"

"The explanation," said I, "is both simple and striking. But the mad fellows could not have imprisoned you, unless under some pretext."

"True," said John, touching his nose; "leave madmen alone for that: every body knows they are cunning. The pretext is, of course, that I am mad. But the truth is, they clapped me in here on account of my philanthropy, as shown in my extraordinary invention."

I took the liberty to ask what that invention was; a question that seemed greatly to surprise worthy John, as indicating a very extraordinary degree of ignorance upon my part. But this ignorance he hastened to remove by informing me, that, both as a philan-

thropist and patriot, he had been grieved by the quarrel betwixt the abolitionists and slave-owners, which appeared to him to threaten the very existence of the republic. "Besides," said he, "I was somewhat of an abolitionist myself, quite desirous to see the poor blackies as free as blackbirds; but then, I saw clear enough, they never could be liberated, without ruining their masters, as well as all the agricultural interests of the South, unless some means could be devised for supplying their loss, by finding substitutes for them. The substitutes once found, I had no doubt every body would come round to abolition in a moment, the Southerners in particular, who, the Lord knows, are sick of the bother of their labourers. Well, sir," quoth John, "to find these substitutes became the problem to be solved; and I solved it, sir, by the invention of my patent niggers to be worked by horse-power—yes, sir, by the invention (and a grand one it was,) of patent niggers—men, sir, not of perishing and suffering flesh and blood, but of wood, iron, leather and canvass, so constructed as (by means of horse-power to put them in motion) to be a great deal better than the real niggers; because, sir, they were to do all kinds

of work, except blacking shoes and feeding the cattle, (upon my soul, sir, I could never make them do *that*,) and never get tired, or sick, or sulky—never die, or run away, or rise in insurrection—never require feeding, nor clothing, nor physicking—in short, sir, the best and cheapest niggers that human wit ever imagined! With these, sir, my glorious invention, I expected to free the blackies, and make my own fortune; and accordingly carried my models to the Abolition Society, to get their recommendation; when, sir, instead of the rapture and triumph which I looked for among the members, rage and jealousy took possession of their souls. They could not bear that they should lose the honour, and glory, and profit of completing the great work of emancipation—that I, who was not actually a professed member of their society—or that any body, save themselves, should reap the splendid reward; and, accordingly, they knocked my models to pieces, maltreated myself, and ended by charging me with madness, and bringing me to this place in a strait-jacket. These, sir, are the true causes of their strange behaviour—jealousy and envy: but it must be remembered, they belong to the majority—that is, to the

madmen; and were hence incapable of seeing that, in persecuting me, they were destroying the negro's best friend."

I expressed, as in civility and duty bound, a great deal of surprise and indignation at the hard and undeserved fate of honest John, whose philanthropy was so poorly rewarded; at which appearance of sympathy he was vastly pleased, declared I was the clearest-headed and sanest man he had ever known, begged to swear eternal friendship with me, and then, giving me to understand there were many other wise and virtuous persons, the victims of the world's malice or insanity, confined like himself in the Asylum, proposed to introduce me to their acquaintance; a proposal to which—after having taken the advice and secured the permission of the keepers—I was glad to accede.

I was, accordingly, ushered into an enclosure in the garden of the Asylum, where, it appeared, such harmless persons as worthy John were permitted to breathe the air, and converse on such subjects as suited the tender state of their intellects.

As I entered this place, of which the gate was immediately locked behind me by a keeper, who attended for the purpose, I per-

ceived there were within it a dozen or more men, some of whom sat on benches under the trees, while others strolled to and fro along the gravelled walks. The noise of our entrance, and the appearance of honest John, with whom all seemed to be perfectly well acquainted, drew them about us; and they were soon introduced to me by name—one being the Honourable Timoleon Smash, an ex-congressman, from Virginia; another, a gentleman of the press, of which, he himself informed me, he had been once a bright and shining light; and others of other respectable ranks and professions.

My friend, John Jones, having introduced me, the ex-editor, Mr. Ticklum, for that was his name, removing a pair of spectacles from his nose, and crumpling into his pocket an old newspaper which he had been reading, begged to know if I was ‘a fellow in misfortune;’ a question I felt some little embarrassment in replying to; when my friend John removed the difficulty by declaring, “I was, as he could bear witness, unfortunate like themselves, in being in my senses among a world of madmen; but had not yet been found out by the world, and so had escaped being made a prisoner; that I was a philanthro-

pic personage and philosopher, who sympathized with them in their sorrows, and came to learn of them those proofs of the folly and injustice of the world which all were so well able to speak."

"I can require," said I, "no better proof of this than has been furnished in the history of my friend Mr. Jones; whose sufferings, considered as a punishment inflicted upon him on account of his philanthropy, I esteem as extraordinary as they are unjust. Truly, it seems to me not merely surprising, but incredible, that men should punish a fellow creature for practising a virtue they so universally commend."

"Surprising!" said Mr. Ticklum, with a stare of melancholy astonishment, while all the rest looked at me with pity and a groan; "why, sir, that's their way; and you must be younger than you seem, and less experienced than we should have supposed, sir, from your sensible appearance, if you are surprised at the inconsistency. Virtue, sir, is a thing man loves best in the abstract; the practice of it interferes with too many of his interests to allow him to be friendly to its professor. Really, sir, we are afraid you do not understand the world; you have not yet been

wronged into knowledge. The virtues best rewarded in the world are its vices: avarice and ambition, impudence and deceit, truckling and time-serving, will win favour, fortune, and distinction, when generosity and modesty, integrity and independence, are repaid with neglect, contempt, imposition—nay, with vindictive hate. It is a truth, sir, that can't be denied, that—as the world now wags—a man can practise no virtue safely: he may write about it, he may talk about it, and gain credit thereby; but the acting of it will assuredly bring him into trouble. There is not a person here present who cannot furnish you good proof of this. Know, sir, that all of us around you are examples of the world's injustice—the martyrs of principle, the victims of our several virtues. We were too good for the world, sir, and therefore the world has clapped us into a madhouse. Sir, you would scarce suppose it of an editor, but we—even we, Daniel Ticklum, as we stand here—are a living monument of the world's injustice. In us you behold a victim of our virtue!”

With that, Mr. Ticklum wiped his eyes; and all the rest groaned, except the Hon. Mr. Smash—a very stately young personage,

with a sad and oratorical voice—who, stepping forward, said,—“ What my friend Ticklum says is perfectly true. Man, a hypocrite even to himself, and inconsistent alike in good and evil, sets a bounty of praise on virtue, which he fancies he desires, only to break the bones of those who bring it to him ! The world has prated a long time of the excellency of *patriotism*—a virtue which not lying historians only, but the universal voice of society, would seem to place among the highest, purest, most honour-deserving of all virtues. How much the world really likes patriotism may be seen in my history; which, while my friend Ticklum recovers his composure, I shall be happy to relate for your edification.”

I expressed myself extremely desirous to hear this curious relation, and Mr. Smash immediately began his history in the following terms.

MY FRIENDS
IN
THE MADHOUSE.

CHAPTER II.

THE PATRIOT'S STORY.

“As I design relating only my political history,” said Mr. Smash, “I shall say nothing of my parentage, birth, or youth, except that the first was highly respectable, as you may perceive by the name, (I am of the Smashes, sir, of Virginia,) that my birth happened in one of the most patriotic counties of the Ancient Dominion, and that my youth was, as I may say, one long dream of public virtue. I longed to serve my country, and approve myself the worthiest of her sons—a passion that grew with my growth, until, in early manhood, it had banished every other from my bosom. The love of pelf and of pleasure, nay, even the love of woman, I

threw aside and forgot, feeding my appetites upon aspirations after renown, and wedding my heart to the glories of my native land. Happy, thought I, is he who can serve his country, enjoying, in life, the *digito monstrari* of a nation's approbation, in death, the *dulce et decorum* of a nation's gratitude, carved in immortal letters on his tomb.

"The great object of my wishes was, at last, effected—I stumped through my district and my fellow citizens sent me to Congress!

"Judge the delight with which I first trod that glorious hall, thronged with the representatives of a free people, each looking a Cato or Aristides, and munching his tobacco with the air of a ruler of the world. I threw myself upon my chair, mounted my legs upon my desk, took my quid of best James-River, and enjoyed for a while the rapture and dignity of my new situation. But this indulgence did not last long: I remembered I was there to serve my country—to perform the great duties of a representative—which service and duties I resolved to enter upon without further loss of time. I began my patriotic labours forthwith.

"The first thing I did was to make a speech; and, as the quantity and quality

of public spirit in the breast of a legislator can only be shown by the length of his harangue, I made my maiden effort as long as the state of my health (which was weak from hard work on the stump and at barbecues during the canvass,) permitted. Having once got the floor—which was no easy matter, there being two or three hundred members who were as ripe for proving their patriotism as I,—I launched into a discourse, in which I handled things both in general and particular, and gave the whole history of Greece and Rome. As to the subject then before the house, I do not remember what it was—or rather I never knew it; nor, indeed, was that a matter of any consequence, the last week of the session being the proper time to speak to the point. I spoke for seven days, and then concluded, my strength giving way sooner than I expected. My speech was, nevertheless, of very good length, and, I believe, my constituents were satisfied. Indeed, upon consideration, I think they had reason to be; for my oration furnished matter (excluding all other, saving a few editorial scraps now and then) to *The Watch-Tower of Freedom*, the weekly paper of my district, week after week, during the whole winter; in fact,

the printing of it occupied the Watch-Tower of Freedom longer than I the hall of Liberty; and, for aught I can tell, they may not have finished it yet.

“This speech made a great sensation. The thrilling eloquence, by which it was said to be characterized, the fiery fervour, the scorching sarcasm, the annihilating invective, the bursts of sublimity and pathos, the keen wit, the elegant humour, the classic style, the poetic adornment, added to the graceful gesture, the magnificent voice, the eye of fire, and other congressional qualities which it enabled me to develop, took the house by storm; and I was at once pronounced a legislator of the first grade—a master and ruling spirit—a sun-born son of genius—a giant of intellect—a Titan of oratory—in short, sir, a great man. Compliments and congratulations fell upon me like the leaves of November; the Speaker shook me by the hand, the President invited me to supper, and members of all parties sought my acquaintance. In a word, I was raised to the pinnacle of favour, and admitted to be one of the first men in Congress.

“Having made my speech, I felt that I had accomplished one of the great objects for which I had been sent to the legislature.

And thus, a chief duty being performed, and my mind released from the load of responsibility that oppresses the unspoken member, I was able to direct my energies to other objects yet to be accomplished, and to reflect what course it became me to take, as a man of principle and true American patriotism, in relation to my future career.

“And now I felt, even more strongly than before, how deep and fervid was the flame with which I burned to do my country service; and during the two weeks which I lay on my back, recovering from the toil of my oration, I devoted every moment to the consideration of the evils under which the country was labouring, and the means of removing them. In a word, I devised and digested a plan of reform, which I resolved to bring before Congress as soon as possible; and, that my constituents might perceive I was entering upon the work in earnest, and without any partial views or inclinings, I determined to begin at home—that is, in Congress itself—and so attack abuses at the fountain-head.

“Observing that two or three different members, while I lay sick, had occupied the house with uncommonly long speeches, I be-

gan to reflect what would be the consequence, were all to claim the privilege of speaking seven days on a stretch, as I had done myself. I was shocked to discover, that, if only two hundred should insist upon speaking that length of time, and only *once* each, it would require a session of three years and ten months to enable them to get through, without counting the time required for business.

“Struck with this discovery, I immediately brought a proposition before the house to amend its regulations so far as to secure attention to the proper business of the nation. The bill which I desired to introduce, provided that no member should be allowed, under any circumstances, (except while making his maiden speech,) to speak longer upon any business before the house, than half an hour at a time.

“The reader who does not trouble himself about journals of Congress, and who skips the reports of debates in his newspaper, will be surprised to hear that this motion, which I considered the most patriotic I could make, since it deprived me of the right of delivering ten other speeches, which I at first meditated, was met by angry remonstrance and the fiercest opposition. Two hundred honoura-

ble members started upon their feet, and charged me with an attack upon their privileges, a design to subvert the liberty of speech. ‘What did they come there for?’ they asked: ‘to maintain the rights of their constituents, and defend their own.’ ‘Was *that*,’ they cried, ‘the temple of Liberty, the hall of Freedom, and were members to be gagged at the very altar? If the honourable member brought padlocks for their lips, why not fetters for their limbs, whips for their backs, daggers for their throats? They could tell *me*, and they could tell Mr. Speaker—they could tell the world, which surveyed their proceedings—that the representatives of American freemen were themselves freemen, who would resist the approaches of the enemy of liberty to the last, and die in the breach, or, as some of them said, ‘in the ditch,’ (which is no proper place for a gentleman’s death-bed,) under the ruins of the constitution.

“In short, there was a deal of eloquent speeches made, and a torrent of indignation poured upon my proposition, and on me. It was in vain that I called the attention of members to the discovery I had made, the surprising fact, that, if we should all speak as

long as we could, and attend to business besides, the session must be necessarily prolonged through a term of four years; which was just twice as long as we had a right to sit, and in direct contravention of the obligation imposed on Congress to hold four different sessions within that period. I was answered, 'the right of speech was sacred, and should not be invaded.' I appealed to their good-sense, and the Speaker called me to order; I addressed myself to their reason, and a member asked me, 'if I meant to insult the house?' while another—a man whom I before was disposed to regard as of quite a patriotic turn, though born so far north as Pennsylvania—told me, 'if I had come to that house with reason in my pocket, I had brought my wares to the wrong market.'

"In truth, my proposition was a bomb-shell, (I use the Congressional figure, as striking for its expressiveness as it is venerable for its age,) cast upon the floor at the feet of members. It produced a commotion even in the galleries; the reporters, its only friends, received it with frenzies of approbation, so that the Sergeant-at-Arms was ordered to expel them: and this is the reason why there

has never been a full and satisfactory report of that debate in the newspapers.

“The motion was lost by a tremendous majority, no one voting in its favour except myself and a member from Down East, who was tongue-tied, and therefore hated long speeches. It caused the members pretty generally to regard me with coolness and ill-will; and, what afflicted me greatly, the Southern members seemed to be the most displeased of all. Nevertheless, I had taken my stand, and opposition only determined me the more strongly to devote myself to the cause of my country. I said to myself, ‘if I fail in my efforts, if I sacrifice myself on the altar of the republic, I shall be remembered as the friend of freedom, and placed among the brightest of its martyrs.’ I determined to persevere in the path pointed out by reason and patriotism together; and I resolved, in order to be virtuous on the largest scale, to tear all sectional feelings from my bosom, to forget that Virginia lay on one side of Mason and Dixon’s line and Massachusetts on the other, and remember only, as Washington had done before me, that I was an American.

“My second proposition, being rather of

a theoretic than practical complexion, prospective and contingent, at least, as to its effects on the national purse, but immediate, certain, and highly advantageous as to its effects on the national character, I was of opinion would be received with favour and applause by all. It was a measure designed to remove from our government a stain charged to attach to all republics, and which, there was good reason to suppose, had a very palpable existence on the fair face of our own. I desired to introduce a bill in which it was resolved, preambulatorily, (though there is no such word in Walker,) 'that the nation was, of right ought to be, and through time would be, grateful to all its citizens who contributed to its glory and weal,' and provided, sectionally, (which is as new a word as the other,) 'that its gratitude should be extended not only to those who lost legs and arms in its service, but to all who, by valuable discoveries and improvements in art and science, by the foundation of philanthropic institutions, the dissemination of moral principles, and the production of works of genius, might be pronounced the benefactors of their country.' On such worthies of the republic I proposed we

should bestow pensions, or grants of land, together with such honours as it consisted with the character of our institutions to allow; and I advised, moreover, that we should begin the work of gratitude by erecting, without a moment's delay, the divers tombs and monuments which Congress had long since voted to deceased heroes of the Revolution, without voting appropriations to build them.

“This proposition, I am grieved to say, produced a hubbub full as great as the other, and caused a still more violent outcry against myself. ‘What!’ cried an honourable member from the neighbourhood of the Rocky Mountains, ‘waste the people’s money! my constituents’ money? Mr. Speaker, if that ar’n’t flat treason, I don’t know what ar’. I say, if there ar’ to be any pensions for improvements, rat all the arts and sciences, and call ’em improvements *on land*, and I stick in a claim for my constituents. But I go ag’in the whole measure. I reckon the honourable feller—that is, the honourable gentleman from Virginnee—thinks money grows among us, out in the West, like deer skins and dirt; but it don’t.’ ‘Extravagance! wilful, criminal, shocking, extravagance!’ cried others by

hundreds. The idea of wasting the people's money seemed to strike all with horror; some were petrified, many aghast; and one member, rising up, was so overcome with dismay that he could not speak a word; but looking at the speaker, and then at me, and then at the speaker again, he tapped his finger against his forehead three times, and then sat down. What he meant, if he meant any thing, I did not then know; but I have since had an idea, he thought I had lost my senses. I endeavoured to satisfy the honourable members that a few thousand dollars taken annually from an exchequer rolling over with a surplus of twenty or thirty millions a year, would not affect the credit of the government, nor reduce a single citizen to bankruptcy; that the American people were not, as *they* seemed to think them, a nation of heartless niggards and misers; that we, the representatives of the only truly popular government in the world, owed it to mankind and ourselves, to the interests of our country and the institutions we affected to prize, to show our fellow creatures we knew how to appreciate and reward the merit of our citizens, and to reward them at least as wisely and generously as kings and princes were wont

to reward their deserving subjects. I say, I endeavoured to satisfy honourable members on these points, and others that occurred to me; but I endeavoured in vain. Honourable members insisted that the people's money was sacred—that their constituents *were* misers and niggards—and that it was our duty, as far as the world and mankind were concerned, to let them take care of themselves, we, the representatives of the United States, taking care of their money. Nay, and one fellow (as I am not now in Congress, I am not obliged to call him ‘gentleman,’) got up and insinuated, ‘that, as every body could see I was a *patriot*, I was getting up the measure with a view to my own future benefit.’

“As a Virginian and a gentleman, I could not stand so gross an insult; I therefore pronounced the man a scoundrel, and called the Speaker to bear witness I should blow his brains out, the moment the house adjourned. As it began to be a serious matter, the Speaker called us to order; the insulter thereupon assured the house he meant nothing personal in the remark; and I, in consequence, acknowledging the same in relation to my threat, the matter blew over without a fight; which was

agreeable to me, having my hands so full of the nation's business. The quarrel was settled; and so was my patriotic proposition. There were but ten men sufficiently alive to the honour and interests of their country to vote for it. No one, indeed, objected to the preamble, namely, that the nation was, ought to be, and would be, grateful to all its good citizens that deserved gratitude; and that part of the bill passed *nem. con.*; but the paying sections, which were the gist of the affair, went by the board. And so it was resolved that the republic of America should be as ungrateful as those of Greece and Rome of yore, and ten times more so.

“My next attempt to arouse my colleagues to a sense of their duty was equally unfortunate. Perceiving that our vast frontiers, both inland and maritime, east, west, north, and south, lay as open and unprotected as the common-lands of a village, so that it would be easy, at any moment, for a curious person, or persons, of covetous propensities, to steal into the land, and help themselves to a few towns and cities, together with as many of the militia as they could catch, I thought it my duty to bring the matter before Congress; and I introduced it accordingly, accompanied

by a bill which I asked to have referred to a special committee. By this bill it was provided that the standing army of the United States should be increased so far as to allow to each fortress on the frontier a garrison to consist of one private and one non-commissioned officer, both well armed.

“The reading of this bill was like throwing *two* bomb-shells among the members. Convulsions of horror and wrath seized instantly upon all. ‘Increase the standing army!’ they cried; ‘put our liberties in the keeping of an armed soldiery! A conspiracy, rank conspiracy! a conspiracy against our freedom!’

“In short, there never was such an uproar in the House before or since; and I was myself almost frightened at the terror I had created. Nothing was seen in my proposal but a design, as audacious in conception as it must prove diabolical in effect, to reduce the nation to bondage, to batter down the Capitol with artillery, and bring the bayonets of the myrmidons of power against the throats of honourable members where they stood. But the terror of honourable members was equalled by their heroism; and again, as in a previous instance, they declared, that, come the usurper and despot when he would, as

for *them*, let others do as they might, they would oppose him face to face, foot to foot, hand to hand, perish in their chains, like the Roman senators under the swords of the savage Brennus, fall with decent dignity like Julius Cæsar, or, snatching up arms, strike a last blow for freedom, and die—as before—‘in a ditch.’

“There never was such an uproar, as I said before; and every word I pronounced, in the effort to allay it, only made matters worse. An honourable member boasting that our frontiers required no guards beyond ‘our gallant and glorious militia,’ I had the effrontery (as it was called,) to tell him that, with all my respect for the militia, I thought they were a very uncertain set of personages; at which insult to the yeomanry of America, he—the aforesaid honourable member—fell into a fit, and was carried off in a dangerous condition to his lodgings. Nay, this expression of mine leading to a debate, in which, as is usual on such occasions, remarks were made on all such subjects connected and unconnected with the question before the House, I had the misfortune to give offence by two other declarations, which a sense of honesty called on me to make—namely, first, that the

Hartford-Conventionists were not all traitors, and, secondly, (but this I offered rather as an opinion than a positive declaration,) that foreigners of six-months residence in the country were not citizens. The first assertion, though it caused faint murmurs of approbation from some Yankee members, was met by others with scornful cries of ‘Eccentricity!’ and the Speaker decided that it was out of order. The second produced a furious and universal explosion, and a hundred voices, at least, charged me with a design to revive those accursed inventions of tyranny and the devil, the Alien and Sedition laws.—In fine, my bill went to the tomb of the Capulets; and it was the general opinion, I would soon follow it.

“That evening, I was waited upon by the delegation of the state I represented, who, after reproaching me, in a formal manner, for deserting (so they called it,) the principles of the South, assumed a more friendly tone, and remonstrated affectionately against the novel and dangerous course I was taking, assuring me ‘there was no use in being so honest.’ They declared I had entered Congress with the finest prospects in the world, but that I was defeating them.

"Gentlemen," said I, with dignity, "I came here, not to exalt myself, but to serve my country."

"You did!" said they, and all looked astonished.—"Your *constituents*, you mean, my dear Mr. Smash," said the eldest of the party, giving me a serious look.

"Sir," said I, "my constituents are my country, my state, and the good people of my district; to all of whom I owe allegiance, but to the first in the highest degree. When I can serve the people of my district, without striking at the interests of the state, I will do so; when I can serve the commonwealth, without infringing the interests of the nation, the commonwealth shall be served; when I can serve my country, I must do so, and without asking whether the interests of my state or district suffer or not."

"Heavens and earth!" cried the delegation, "this is flat federalism!"

"No, gentlemen," said I "it is patriotism."

"Federalism! consolidation! aristocratic! monarchical! anti-republican!"

"My gentlemen fell into a rage, but were called to order by the Nestor of the delegation, who took them aside, and having counselled with them awhile, returned, and grasp-

ing my hand, said, with a friendly and sympathetic countenance, while the others sat nodding their heads ominously at one another, and looking on with a doleful stare,—

“You are a young man, Mr. Smash, quite a young man—a very promising talented man, Mr. Smash; but young—young and inexperienced, Mr. Smash. May rise to the first honours in the land, Mr. Smash, if only a little cautious, and prudent—a little prudent Mr. Smash. Take my advice, Mr. Smash: your health is infirm, you have a nervous temperament, a great deal of enthusiasm, Mr. Smash; you allow yourself to be excited, and then, you know, a man says strange things, and *does* strange things, Mr. Smash. Now take my advice: keep your mind tranquil, Mr. Smash; stay at home a few days, and live low—very low, Mr. Smash; avoid all speaking, don’t engage in debate for a whole month—not for a whole month, Mr. Smash: *do* take care of yourself, or you don’t know what may happen, Mr. Smash. The brain, Mr. Smash, the brain is a very tender and delicate organ—a very, *very* tender organ, Mr. Smash.”

“I smiled at the old gentleman’s fears, assured him I found myself in uncommon

health, and the delegation left me. I saw they were displeased at the freedom and boldness of my course; but, as my conscience and common-sense told me I was right, I resolved to persevere, and serve my country, whether Congress would or not. I perceived in them a strong example of the effect of sectional and party feeling in warping the minds of honourable men from the path of duty; and I resolved the more firmly that my spirit should hold fast to its integrity.

MY FRIENDS
IN
THE MADHOUSE.

CHAPTER III.

THE PATRIOT'S STORY CONTINUED.

“THE next day, a measure was brought before Congress, the success of which was universally allowed to be of vital importance to the nation; but, as it was proposed and supported by administration members, the party in opposition felt themselves called upon to oppose it with all their strength. I should have told the reader, that the freemen of my district were anti-administration almost to a man, and that I was therefore of the opposition party. I resolved to prove my independence and patriotism, by voting for this measure, which reason and common-sense told me should be supported; and I did so.

“Horrible was the effect. My old associ-

ates, ridiculing what they called my unparalleled apostacy, reviled me, as far as the Speaker would permit, as a renegade from the party; while the newspapers, (that is, on our side,) which had hitherto treated me with uncommon courtesy, now burst out into a frenzy of rage and vituperation, some calling me Judas Iscariot, others Benedict Arnold, and all agreeing I was a monster of perfidy and baseness, a traitor to my principles, the murderer of my country. Some spoke of tar and feathers, while others hinted there were daggers in the hands of freemen to reward the betrayer of their rights. Vials—or rather demijohns—of wrath were poured on my head, and tempests of scorn and vilification were let loose about my ears. In a word, had I descended into Pandemonium itself, which many wise persons think lies no lower than a few feet below the foundations of the Capitol, I could not have found myself beset by a more fire-fingered, venom-tongued, unrelenting set of persecutors than a single act of patriotism now brought against me. I was not merely an apostate and assassin—I was a fool and madman. The very papers which, a month before, had lauded to the skies my extraordinary genius, my incomparable elo-

quence, now discovered that I possessed not a single talent—that I was a tiresome, bombastic, contemptible speaker, with no merit beyond the long wind and loquacity of an old woman—in short, that I was a booby, and the greatest one in Congress.

“It is true, what I lost on one side I gained on the other. The administration prints, which had been, at first, rather blind to my merits, now burst into fervid panegyrics, eulogizing my genius, my intrepidity, my integrity, my patriotic union with the friends of the nation; and the President’s chief cook, coming to me by night in his best coat, offered me my choice betwixt a land office in the West, an Indian agency, or a ministry to Jerusalem.

“Who would think that my proud and patriotic rejection of a share in the spoils of office, offered by a grateful executive, should have only exposed me, when known, as it speedily was, to fresh attacks of indignation? Honourable members were incensed that I should presume to greater disinterestedness than themselves—that I should profess a code of morals superior to that which experience and custom had shown to be most convenient for a Congressman. They abused

my 'affected honesty,' for so they called it; they laughed at my 'romantic honour,' my 'political sentimentality;' while some, still more uncharitable, heaped sarcasm on the wisdom that had prevented my accepting 'a reward which, I knew, the superior branch of Congress would not have sanctioned.'—Alas for the man, who, in this enlightened age, in this unsophisticated country, has the audacity to play the patriot!

"My next effort had the good effect to restore me to the favour of the party; but it lost me the friendship of the chief cook. In the honesty of my heart, and under the persuasion that the measure I then proposed would meet the approbation of all, I introduced a bill providing for the dismissal from the public service of all office-holders who meddled in elections, or played the demagogue at political meetings or in newspapers. For this the opposition pretty generally voted; but it was treated with the greatest contumely by the friends of power, and strangled without ceremony. They charged me indignantly with my desertion of *their* party, though, heaven knows, I had never joined it—with my fickleness of mind, my natural perfidy of spirit, &c. &c.; and con-

cluded by execrating the audacity of my attack on the rights of citizens; whereas, on the contrary, my sole intention, as I declare on my conscience, was to *defend* the rights of citizens. The papers on that side of the question took up the cudgels, and, as it was generally admitted they knew how to use them, I received such a basting for my tergiversation, wrong-headedness, black heartedness, &c., as broke all the bones of my spirit—though, happily, not my spirit itself. The wrath on that side of the question extended even to my friend the chief cook, who clapped into the governmental journal an article written by his own hand, in which it was insinuated I had taken a bribe from the Emperor of the Turks, who was at that time suspected to be in the country, buying patriots at the highest prices; though what his sublime highness wanted with them was never discovered.

“My next act destroyed all the good effect, as far as I was personally concerned, wrought by the preceding; and, indeed, I was from this moment a falling man, a sinking patriot, a martyr to my principles and my love of country. As Aristides fell, so fell I, detested for my *justness*. Timoleon and the

elder Brutus sacrificed the blood of their own families to the interests of their countries; and their countries voted them a brace of unnatural murderers and numskulls, as, it is probable, they were. My own fate was somewhat similar; I sinned with the same disinterestedness, and was rewarded with equal gratitude.

“ My sins—for so they were accounted, though posterity I hope will judge otherwise—I intend recording in as few words as possible, that I may get the sooner to their reward. I voted for a *northern measure*, and thought it was patriotic to do so. But from that moment my friends of the south considered me a madman, and my constituents began to take the alarm. This was committing the seven deadly sins all at once, and forgiveness was impossible. I then, in a harangue which I made on the subject of patriotism, to enlighten the honourable members, who, I perceived, did not know what patriotism was, succeeded in inflaming the rage of both parties, by assuring them (which was a thing I thought they all firmly believed,) that America had never produced more than *one* Washington, and that he was not born in Virginia, but in America. I say, I offend-

ed both parties; for the friends of power, it seems, insisted that their chief was a second Washington; and my fellow Virginians considered, and, indeed, pronounced it 'impiety' itself, to admit that George Washington was any thing less than a Virginian.

"My next sin of patriotism was a declaration, which I made only after deep reflection, viz. that the right of nullifying the laws enacted in that Congress existed in no individual or body of individuals in the United States, saving only in the Supreme Court thereof; which opinion was immediately pronounced 'Blasphemy,' amid groans and shrieks of indignation.

"I then, being somewhat tired of the eternal croaking honourable members made against the aristocracy—that is, the foolish ladies and gentlemen of the land—as being the foes of democracy and liberty, ventured to express a belief, founded on the house-burnings, riots, lynchings, &c., at that time somewhat prevalent in the democratic circle, that liberty was in less danger from the aristocracy, or foolish ladies and gentlemen as aforesaid, than from the democracy itself; which declaration was unanimously pronounced 'the most astonishing sample of

Atheism to which that house had ever been compelled to listen;’ and indeed it produced such a thrill of horror in the assembly that one gentlemen fell into fits, and was carried to his lodgings in an extremely dangerous condition.

“ My next—my last and greatest, sin grew directly out of that declaration; for honourable members starting up in fury, and bidding me ‘ know, that the democracy of my district, the honest and confiding constituents whom I had betrayed, would exact of me a severe penalty for my misdeeds; that they had already called a public meeting in the district to express their indignation at the course I had pursued, and would in a short time send me instructions to change it; or resign my seat in that house:—I say, these innuendoes and menaces being sternly flung in my teeth, I rose and called the house to witness, ‘ that I held myself to be a rational being, the servant and factor of my constituents, sent to that house to legislate for their benefit and that of the nation; and not the tool of their caprices, to pander away honesty, honour, and common sense to their whims and passions—and, in a word, that I utterly denied their right to instruct me to any act opposed to the dictates of my own reason.

“ ‘Treason and madness !’ cried every soul in the house, save one, whom the awfulness of my heresy had shocked into an apoplexy, and who was afterwards, when the house adjourned, found sitting at his desk stone-dead; ‘ treason and madness ! madness and treason ! treason and madness !’ And so they went on exclaiming against me, until the house adjourned.

“ There was more meaning in these expressions than I had at any time suspected. A storm was brooding over me, of which I did not dream, until that last patriotic confession (for surely the resolution that gave it utterance came not more from personal independence than a love of country,) caused it suddenly to burst in thunder over my head. As I passed from the house, I was suddenly seized upon by six strong men, (the members of the house, with at least twenty Senators, who were present, looking coolly on, and refusing me help,) clapped into a carriage, driven rapidly away, and in due course of time, deposited—ay, by the faith of an honest man and Congressman!—in the madhouse in which you find me.

“ Such was the reward of public virtue ! I

was, I believe, the first martyr to liberty ever served in that way in America; but it has been, I believe, ever since, a standing rule in Congress to vote any member a madman who betrays the slightest symptoms of patriotism.

“In this Asylum, and particularly in the solitude of the dungeon to which I was first consigned, I have had leisure to review my Congressional career, and ponder on the truths with which it has made me acquainted. I perceive that the days for Timoleons and Washingtons have gone by, and that the world, however much it may stand in need of their services, is determined to do without them. The cruel reception my patriotism had met from my brother legislators, I had good reason to know, was sanctioned by the people at large, who, in these days, actually seem to entertain the most cordial hatred of all public men who will not condescend to cheat them. That my fellow labourers in the legislature should array themselves against me was not, perhaps, very surprising or inexplicable; but it was a grievous wound to my spirit to find the people for whom I laboured, siding, as (if I am to judge from the public prints) they all did against me. Before I left my dungeon, I discovered, in a

fragment of newspaper which was accidentally left in the room, an account of my constituents having burned me in effigy in various places throughout the district; with some remarks of the editor highly approbatory of that just expression of popular indignation. The people (I mean all the 'ocracies together,) were therefore as unwilling to be served by, as their delegates were to serve with patriots. They required, not men of integrity and talent—upright and experienced sages—to watch over the interests of the nation; but truckling parasites, the slaves of their sovereign passions, the tools of their imperial whims, to 'play their hand,' (as the blacklegs have it,) in the gambling contest of interest against interest, section against section, party against party, which they have chosen to dignify with the title of legislation.

"I have now learned to understand the meaning of the saying often droned into the minds of youth, without being always appreciated—that virtue is its own reward. Well, indeed, should it be its own reward, since, commonly, it has no other."

With these words, and a heavy sigh, the patriot finished his story.

"A very hard case," said the editor,

scratching his head. "It was a very foolish thing of you to be so patriotic; but we can't blame you: men *do* say very fine things of patriotism—indeed we believe we have said them ourself; so that it is not surprising a young man should be sometimes misled. However, we have been just as foolish, and, like you, a martyr to principle. Patriotism—as a sentiment, or poetic fiction, or historical remembrance—is dear to the imaginations of all men, and its praises are ever on their lips; but if we consult the records of nations, we shall find that patriots, in general, have had but a scurvy time of it. It is the same with other virtues, as I said before: they are the apples of Sodom, that men admire as long as they merely look at them, but loathe and cast from them, the moment they have tasted. Yes," continued Mr. Ticklum, turning again to me—"we also are the victim of our virtue!"

With that, he wiped his eyes a second time, and I, sympathizing in his grief, and being curious to know what that virtue was, which a journalist could practise consistently with his editorial duties, and how it had reduced him to his present condition, begged he would do me the favour to relate his history.

MY FRIENDS
IN
THE MADHOUSE.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EDITOR'S STORY.

“SIR,” said Mr. Ticklum, “we were editor and proprietor of the Light of the People—more commonly and familiarly called the People’s Light—a paper, sir, extremely well known, and, when it came into our hands, and indeed, as we may justly say, for some years after, of the highest repute in the world of letters. Sir, it was a vigorous paper, and it had seven thousand subscribers; more than one half of whom were good pay. It was a rich paper, therefore, as well as a good one, and we were making our fortune by it.

“Sir—when we became the editor of the People’s Light, we were acknowledged to be the ablest hand that had ever conducted it;

and we *were*, sir—we scorn all affected modesty; as an editor, sir, we have a right to praise ourself. Besides our natural abilities, sir, we enjoyed the advantage of an extensive acquaintance with the public tastes. Our predecessor was an experienced man, and our friend; and when we bought him out, he gave us a deal of instruction on the true principles of nasiduction.”

“*Nasiduction?*” said I, interrupting the gentleman; “what is that?”

“Sir,” said Mr. Ticklum, “it is a word used among editors, to express their art, that being otherwise without a name. It means, sir, to lead by the nose—or nose-leading; and is thus expressive of the object of the art editorial, which is to manage the public.

“Our predecessor gave us the results of his experience on the subject of nasiduction; and, thus accomplished, we entered upon the duties of the People’s Light with the skill, the power, and the success of a veteran. We became a shining light in the party—that is, the party we belonged to—and were soon esteemed its chief organ. As a politician, we flatter ourself, our abilities were undeniable; and in the other spheres of editorial avocation we were not found wanting. Our talent

for invective was universally acknowledged; we abused our opponents with a zeal that gained us the love and respect of every member of our faction. If a reputation was to be blasted, a spirit wounded to the quick, a doubtful friend to be held up to contempt, or an incautious enemy to execration, who was so ready, who so able, to wield the lash of punishment? Nay, if the party itself was to be humbugged, if the interests of the leaders, our great patrons, required a little dust to be thrown in the eyes of our readers, who could effect the purpose with equal address? Sir, we knew how to inflame the rage, and disturb the fears, of our subscribers; we knew how to awaken their self-love, their vanity, their pride, and thus lead them to deeds of glory. In short, sir, we were a first-rate editor, a man of reputation, sir, a man of power, a man of money—we were making our fortune, and—no thanks to virtue—with none of her assistance. We were a happy man, sir: we sat under our own vine and fig-tree, we warmed ourself at our own fire, we rode our own horse, we fattened on our own chickens, and we endured the scolding of our wife, and the squalling of our children, with equanimity, for we endured

them in our own house. As we said before, we were making our fortune: we had a thousand friends to help us spend it.

“Behold how virtue—sir, we say *virtue*, for virtue it was—crept betwixt us and the sunshine of prosperity; hacked to pieces our vine and fig-tree, put out our fire, spavined our horse, killed our chickens, and brought the sheriff’s surliest deputy into our best parlour.

“We had the misfortune, one night, to dream that the devil came to our bed-side, bidding us get up and follow him. This we did, (that is, we dreamed we did,) for we saw he was a person not to be trifled with; but we must confess, sir, it was with fear and trembling. We ventured, however, as he led us into the street, to ask whither he was carrying us. ‘To your appointed place,’ said he, looking as black as midnight, but wagging his tail, as if pleased with our company. Then taking us by the hand, he made a spring into the air at least ten feet high, and flinging up his legs, and ours too, as we reached that height, he made a dive headlong into the pavement, which, instead of dashing out our brains, as we expected, yielded to the shock, and away we went through flag-stones and gravel, gas-pipes and culverts, the solid earth

and still more solid rock, until we gained his infernal dominions about two miles below. Here, sir, we saw sights that made our hair stand on end; and it is our purpose, on some future occasion, to commit an account of them to the press: but at present we shall speak of them briefly, and of such only as are illustrative of our own story.

“Pray, sir,” said the Honourable Mr. Smash, here interrupting the story, “allow me to ask if you can’t speak of them in the first person singular? I don’t wish to be critical or impertinent; but, really, after what I have suffered from the press, I assure you I never hear that grand editorial *we*, without feeling as if again undergoing the pangs of castigation; and, upon my honour, sir, the fancy is quite uncomfortable.”

“Any thing to gratify our patrons—that is, I mean, to oblige a friend,” said Mr. Ticklum, descending from the style professional to the humbler phrase of individuality. With which proof of his condescension and good nature, he resumed his relation, as follows.

“A very strange and dismal-looking place into which I was led by the devil, my conductor, attracted my curiosity; and asking him what place it was, he told me, The Place of

Public Spirits. And being pleased with the interest I displayed in his concerns, he proceeded to show me the rarities of his realm, with which I was wonderfully struck. ‘This province of my dominions, containing my good Public Spirits,’ said he, ‘is divided into several departments, or hells, very methodically arranged, each containing a peculiar genus of the damned. For example—you are now passing through the Hell of Politicians; consisting of two rooms, the one containing the politic by ambition—or those who went into public life for the noble purpose of rising to distinction and power; the other appropriated to the politic by covetousness—your base dogs who served nations with the view of picking their pockets.’

“With that, I looked about me in the first room, a great grotto lighted by fires that were stirred up by imps, and saw the ambitious gentry hung up by the heels against the ceiling, like so many bats in a cave, smoking and broiling, and seeming ever on the point of dropping into the fires below; of which there was the more danger, as each had his bundle of peccadilloes tied to his neck, weighing him down, and the little imps of the fire every now and then saluted them with a volley of

red hot chunks, as if trying to knock them from their holds. In the next chamber, a cavern similar to the first, were the politic by covetousness—fat placemen boiling in caldrons of molten gold and silver, bubbling up and down like so many tormented bullfrogs, with little scullion imps that sat stirring the pots, and occasionally tapping each seething sinner over the head, with red-hot poker.

“ ‘Truly,’ said I, surprised at the sight, ‘I thought politicians were more virtuous people. Have you any of our American patriots here?’

“ ‘Oh,’ said the devil, ‘a plenty of them.’

“ With that, we passed into a third grot, where were a number of souls, some in great sieves, in which they were searced along with pitchforks and cannon-balls at a white heat; others roasting in heaps, for all the world like heaps of ore roasting at a furnace; and some again being mashed under fulling-hammers, that ground them to atoms at every blow; while others were flaming in refining-pots with white and black flux, that kept them sputtering and flashing in a manner marvellous to behold.

“ I asked, what kind of public spirits these were that were handled so roughly.

“ ‘Oh,’ said the devil, ‘they are Reformers

and Agitators—honest personages now undergoing a process to reform their own qualities—a matter which, in their eagerness to amend their neighbours, they entirely forgot to attend to in the world above.’

“The next thing that struck me was a multitude of souls, some grovelling along the floors of a dark passage which we walked through, others cowering away in corners as if to hide them from sight, but all, as I could perceive, having their heads strown over with live coals, and vipers fastened on their breasts. I asked my satanic guide, ‘who these unlucky wretches might be.’

“‘What,’ said he, ‘don’t you know them? and some of your own work, too? These are all small game—the tools and victims of the good fellows you have been looking at.’

“Upon which, rapping some dozen or two of them over the shoulders with a stout bamboo he carried, they started up and displayed the countenances of individuals I very well remembered, some of them poor devils that, being in want of public places, had been employed to do the dirty work of the party, by way of deserving them, as well as their own damnation; some, not place-hunters, but sovereign citizens, who, by a little drumming

at their fancies and passions, had been induced to do the same thing, under the impression they were playing the parts of good and honest citizens; besides sundry persons of better note, some of them men of promise, ambitious to serve the public, whom, having become obnoxious to, or put themselves in the way of the party, I had helped to bring under the lash of correction, or drive into the shades of obscurity, where there was little fear of our ever being troubled by them again.

“The sight of these latter personages caused me some concern. Until that moment, it had never occurred to me, that calling a man in the public papers ‘traitor,’ ‘hireling,’ ‘villain,’ and so on, and teaching society to think him so, was doing him any mischief, except a political one; but the embers upon the head, and the worm at the heart, struck me with both dismay and compunction. Nor were these feelings much diminished, when my conductor whipped up sundry other sufferers, who fell foul of me with their tongues, upbraiding me with numerous other sins of which I had never made much account before. Some charged me with having made them the victims of

sharpers, by lauding speculations that were designed for no purpose but to gull numskulls. Here was a soul who accused me of cheating him out of his dollars, by recommending to purchasers some swindler's ware, of which I knew nothing, except that it was good-natured to commend; while a hundred and fifty opened upon me full mouth as their murderer, for having lauded the excellency of a steamboat, by which they were all blown into eternity.

“But the most grievous part of the spectacle was the multitudes, the very herds of people who laid their deaths at my door, because of the quack medicines they had taken on my recommendation; for though, in an argument with the devil on the subject, I insisted that the notices of nostrums in my paper were puffs written by the proprietors, and printed and paid for as advertisements, and that, therefore, I had no share in commending them; he declared I was entirely mistaken, that the giving publicity to such things was in itself a recommendation, and I was as much chargeable with their effects as if I had accepted an agency from the compounder, and, myself, supplied the public with death, at a dollar a bottle.

“Having settled this matter, much more to his own liking than mine, Diabolus bade me ‘never mind such small ware, (meaning the tools and victims,) but come along and see something of greater importance.’ And giving me a jerk, he dragged me onwards, until the passage we trod terminated in a great chamber, the floor of which, sinking down like the sweeping sides of an amphitheatre, ended at last in a great bog or quagmire; while at the top, where we paused, were long ranges of galleries running all around. In these galleries lounged a great variety of devils, looking down with interest upon what passed below; while in the quagmire, floundering in it up to the knees, were multitudes of men, great and small, engaged with marvellous earnestness pelting one another with mud. ‘Upon my word,’ said I, ‘I don’t understand this at all. What kind of public spirits are these? and what place is it?’

“The devil looked amazed. ‘Is it possible,’ said he, ‘you don’t know? that you don’t recognise your friends from their amusement? Zounds, sir, this is the hell of editors!’ Upon my word, I could not help laughing, it all looked so natural. There they were, indeed, my learned and able contemporaries, be-

daubing one another with mudballs, with such zeal and energy as if the weal of a universe depended upon their pastime. Thinks I to myself, 'if a certain place that I know of is no worse than this, it is not so bad, after all.' 'Don't be too sure of that,' said Old Nick, reading my thoughts; 'it is all fine fun for a while, but no such pleasant life to lead for ever.' And, indeed, as I looked, and observed one gentleman get a ball in the eye, another a pellet on the cheek, a third a whole mountain of mud on his back, I began to grow melancholy at the thought that the Lights of the World should be so unworthily engaged thus wasting their energies on one another. Nor was this feeling but a little increased, when Diabolus took occasion to observe, 'he was fond of editors: with other sinners,' said he, 'I have a deal of trouble, and am obliged, on the average, to appropriate the services of at least one imp among a thousand, for the purpose of tormenting them. Editors, fortunately, know how to torment themselves.—And now, Mr. Daniel Ticklum, of the People's Light,' said he, 'you know your place—descend.'

"With that he seized me by the nape of the neck, and tossed me into the thick of my

contemporaries, who received me with a shower of mud-balls, which, for all of their softness, had such an effect upon my feelings that I considered myself murdered outright, and opened my mouth to cry for quarter, which I received in the shape of a second volley from the whole company. At that moment, I awoke, and found it was all a dream.

“It was a dream, sir; but the more I revolved it in my mind, the more it troubled and perplexed me. At last, however, I became persuaded it was a vision of warning, sent me by some good angel, (for one would not think the devil so benevolent,) which it became me to improve. I became a new man. Sir, would you believe it? I began to think, that, in accommodating my principles to those of my patrons, in toiling to please the party and my neighbours, at the sacrifice of some truth and more independence, I was doing wrong. I resolved to change my course, and act the part that became a high-minded, conscientious man—I had no idea of going to the devil for my subscribers. I resolved to turn over a new leaf, and pursue that fearless, honest, independent course, for which so many of my worthy fellow-citizens were calling:

for, indeed, it was a common subject of lamentation, throughout the land, in my day, that we had so few editors of high, fearless, independent spirit.

“Sir, when I made that resolution I had seven thousand subscribers: a week after I had put it into execution, I had but two thousand! My first independent remark was the signal of my ruin. And what was that remark? Why, sir, a compliment to an enemy, an opposition candidate—an admission that he was an honest and able man, in many respects superior even to our own candidate, and worthy of confidence and honour. A few more truths ended the matter. ‘Stop my paper!’ was echoed in my ears by two thousand voices, and thrown before my eyes in as many epistolary missives. Nay, sir, one half even of the three thousand subscribers who never paid their dues, fell into the like anger, and bade me ‘stop their papers.’—In short, sir, it was a lost case with me, my subscribers left me, my creditors put their accounts into the hands of lawyers, and my friends, not knowing how else to dispose of me, clapped me into this Asylum.

“Draw your own moral from my story: it is a true one. As long as I was willing to

enslave my spirit, to crush my sense of right and wrong, to forget my principles, to devote the energies of my mind to flatter the whims and passions of my patrons, I enjoyed their favour, and prospered; the moment I became a man of principle, I lost it.—I say again, that men love virtue best in the abstract. The dignity of independence, the beauty of honour, the excellence of principle, are ever in the mouths of men, nine-tenths of whom will conspire together to ruin the editor who reduces them to practice.

“But here is my young friend and contemporary, Slasher, a brother of the press, and, like me, a victim of his virtue: he can substantiate every thing I say.

MY FRIENDS
IN
THE MADHOUSE.

CHAPTER V.

THE STORIES OF THE HONEST CRITIC, THE
DUELLIST, AND THE MAN OF TRUTH.

“MY friend Ticklum mistakes,” said Mr. Slasher, a smart young gentleman, who, instead of listening with respect to gather wisdom as it fell from the lips of his senior, whistled fol-de-rol-dol all the time, but now made me a bow and began: “I owe my downfall less to my virtues than to a display of them highly imprudent in my situation. *My* idea of virtue is, that a man likes it well enough, even in practice, so long as it is exercised only at the expense of his neighbours; and this opinion I consider susceptible of proof. Thus, being a critic, (for, you must know, I was junior editor and sole censor of a literary

print,) I had a notion, my readers would be delighted with the honesty that served them up an author, handsomely roasted and well done, every week: for I have long observed that the world has as natural a hankering after author-baitings as after the baitings of bulls and bears. This idea I was confirmed in by finding, that although I, in pursuance of the system I had begun, puffed all and every thing brought before me with all my might, our paper, indifferently countenanced at the first, grew poorer in patronage every day; so that the principal conductor at last deserted it entirely, and I was advanced to his vacant chair. I resolved as my friend Ticklum says, to turn over a new leaf, and strike a sensation, by impaling every scribbler I could lay hands on;—and, that I might at once get a reputation for impartiality, which I thought would be useful, I began the campaign by demolishing a book written by one of my own friends who had often lamented that books were praised too indiscriminately. The book was an uncommonly bad one, and, as I may say, I did no more than tell the truth of it. But that truth killed me. It was thought so extraordinary, first that a critic should, in these days, treat a book according to its merits, and, secondly, that he

should speak the truth of his own friend, that there was no way of accounting for the phenomenon, except by supposing I had had a quarrel with the gentleman; or, in failure of that, that I had suddenly lost my senses. It was proved that the author had never offended me. The inference was therefore inevitable; and *here* I am.

“If you can suppose the impartiality that arose from selfish considerations a virtue, why then, it must be admitted, the world treated me ungenerously. But my own opinion,” added the graceless critic, “is that it was a proper punishment for my folly. Critics and authors have a common interest, and should hunt in couples, bamboozling mankind together. If you will have a proper confirmation of Ticklum’s doctrine on the subject of virtue, apply to my friend Lawless there, who can discourse feelingly on the subject.”

“He says the truth,” said Mr. Lawless, a lugubrious looking person, who now took up the thread of his discourse. “Society flattered me into a virtue, and drove me into a vice, for daring to practise which I was, in both cases, equally punished.

“My story is short and simple. My father

was a man of just temper and morals, wise, upright, and religious, and instilled into my mind, from the earliest days, his own lofty principles. He taught me to be patient under wrong, to forgive offence, to forbear revenge; and the world itself told me, that to do so was magnanimity and religion. What my father had inculcated, what society insisted on, I found sanctioned and supported by own feelings. I, therefore, when my principles were brought to a trial, did what I had no doubt the world expected of me—I held fast to them. I was a man of peace, and sought to pass blameless through the world. But I could not avoid the contests and bickerings incident to all who mingle with their fellows: I had no protection against the wrath of the bully and the injuries of the ill-tempered.

“It was my misfortune to quarrel with a man, who was emboldened by a knowledge of my peaceful principles, (for I had acted on them, though not under such urgent circumstances, before,) to treat me with the greatest insult, and even violence; and, not content with having thus disgraced me, he even proceeded to the length of challenging me to a duel. My feelings, sir, were as keen, my sense of the outrage as bitter, my sufferings

under the shame as great, as any man's could have been; but I could not shed the blood of the wronger. I thought of the instructions of my father, I thought of the precepts of my religion, I thought of the testimony society had so long and so loudly borne against the duellist, and I refused to take vengeance. This, I had been told before, was magnanimity and true courage: society now, to my surprise, told me it was cowardice.

“I do not believe I am, or ever was, a coward—but that is no matter. But grant that it *was* cowardice—what was there in it to require, or authorize, punishment? Does cowardice commit murder? does it steal? does it burn? does it defraud? It is, certainly, not a crime; yet what crime is punished with greater severity? *Contempt* is to man's spirit what the scourge is to his body; and contempt is the lash with which the world arms itself against the man convicted of the felony of fear. We are brave or timid as God makes us. If courage be a virtue, why not fear? It is an agent, and a powerful one, in repressing evil, and, therefore, given to man for his good. How absurd to punish that to which both religion and law address themselves, to win the human race from crime!

At all events, it is only negatively evil, as implying the absence of a quality that man boasts in common with beasts of prey.

“ But it is not my object to refine on this subject. I leave it to philosophers to determine in what degree, and in what way, turpitude is involved in timidity. Granting that I was a craven, (for it is now indifferent to me what imputation may rest on my name,) what right had society to punish me for doing a thing it had so long inculcated as a duty and virtue? I was called a coward, and was deemed so; my friends looked upon me with disdain, my late associates repelled me with scorn. Men sneered openly in my face, and even woman—the very maid who had at first swooned with terror at the thought of my danger in combat—now turned from me as a creature too dishonourable for notice. I was posted, blazoned upon the corners, as a dastard; I was assaulted, too, in the street; and, my adversary being a man of strength greater than my own, I was —— But why should I speak it? As far as a man could be disgraced by the villany of another, I was disgraced; and the world, which should have sympathized and pitied, accepted the last outrage only as a signal for harsher persecu-

tion. I could not defend myself; I sought protection of the law. The very counsellor received me with contempt, told me that, in a case like mine, 'no *gentleman* need be advised what to do,' and recommended me, 'if I designed carrying my complaint before a legal tribunal, to seek the assistance of some pettifogger, whose ideas of honour and duty corresponded with my own.'—I perceived that I could obtain no redress, that I could not even protect myself from future violence, without incurring additional disgrace.

"Conceive my feelings, conceive what was my situation. The respect of my fellows was to me as the breath of life; and I had lost it. I was a ruined man—rejected, despised, derided, trampled on—and all because I had not imbrued my hands in blood—because I had not committed a crime which the finger of Heaven and the hearts of man had pronounced the greatest a mortal could commit. If my forbearance was a virtue, let society take the blame of blasting it. Deficient in spirit or not, I certainly had not courage to endure universal scorn, to be pointed at as a branded felon. I sought my adversary;—I fought him—I killed him.

"I was no longer a coward; but I was a

murderer! The dastard was forgotten, but the sin of the homicide was inexpiable. The moment my enemy fell, society became wise and moral, and I was exiled from its presence for ever. The latter verdict was just, yet what produced the crime? Ask yourselves what encouragement the world gives to the virtues it so constantly eulogizes? I am the victim of worldly inconsistency. Society drove me from my principles, and then punished me for the dereliction."

With these words, the unfortunate narrator made an end of his story, and immediately after walked away to conceal his agitation, which appeared to be getting the mastery of him. His story touched the tender feelings of Mr. Ticklum, who again applied to his handkerchief, and declared with a sob, "the world was mad, and he was sorry he had ever taken the trouble to edit a paper for it." With that, he called upon a fifth gentleman, a very agreeable, honest-looking personage, whom he called Frankman, to relate his experience of the real encouragement given by mankind to the practice of virtue.

"In me," said Mr. Frankman, making me a polite bow, and laying his hand pathetically

on his heart—"in me you behold a lover of *truth*. Truth being a virtue which men universally pretend to love, as the foundation of all that is excellent in morals and useful in science, you may suppose that I, who made it the rule and pole-star of my existence, was a special favourite of the world. I assure you, however, on the contrary, that nobody who ever lived in the world endured more constant ill-treatment than I.

"My misfortunes commenced in the earliest childhood, and were all attributable to a love of truth instilled into me by my father; who, while drumming it into my head with one hand, laboured hard to beat it out with the other. Thus, I remember, that for every infantile fib I told, I got a liberal correction, which served to make fibbing hateful to me; and for every truth, the same being commonly a confession of a cat killed, a hen-roost robbed, or some of the neighbours' children hit with a pebble in the eye, I had an abundant birching, which would have made truth-telling just as abhorrent, had not my father been at the pains to assure me he castigated, not my confessions, but my faults, which would have met with punishment twice as

emphatic, had I made any attempt to conceal them.

“In this way, my mind got a bias in favour of truth, which will last me through life. I carried it to school with me, where, had it not already become a part and parcel of my nature, it must have been whipped out of me, the whole school conspiring against me for that purpose. Besides confessing all my own peccadilloes, when called upon to do so by the master, who invariably flogged me for them, I felt a similar impulse to confess those of my schoolmates, who rewarded me in the same way; and, what with the masters and boys together, I think there was scarce a day, for five years together, Sundays and holydays excepted, that I could not boast at least one sound buffeting; and that, too, not for *my* sins, but the sins of other people. Sir, it is inexpressible how much my schoolmates thumped me! They all declared they hated liars; but, it was evident, their affection for truth, if that followed as a corollary, was extremely theoretical. I know, they heartily hated me in practice.

“The love of truth cost me a fortuné, as it did the fair Cordelia before me. I had an old aunt, who was somewhat of Lear’s com-

plexion; and being about to make her will, she assembled her two dozen nephews, to select a Benjamin, and note him down for the lion's portion. I was the old lady's favourite; she loved my love of truth, as she continually assured me; and a lie would have sealed me in her heart for ever. 'Johnny, my dear,' said she, giving me a kiss, 'if I should leave you all I am worth in the world, you would be glad when I died, wouldn't you?' 'I would, aunt Sally,' said I: and I told her the truth; for she was rich as a Jew, and I knew the value of money. But the truth did not please the admirer of truth. She turned me out of the house, and left her money to my cousin Tommy Whapper, who was the greatest bouncer I ever knew.'

"The love of truth cost me also a mistress, and, as my fate would have it, a rich one; for, having asked me one day, 'if I did not think her nose was crooked,' (that having been hinted to her by an ill natured friend;) I told her it was; which was nothing more than truth; but the consequence was, that she utterly discarded, and would never more speak to me.

"In short, sir, the love of truth has caused me more misfortunes than you can well ima-

gine; and were I to relate one tithe of the varied grief it has entailed upon me, I should occupy your attention for a week. It interfered with all my plans of life; for my father being too honest a man to have any thing to leave me, I was early driven into the world to shift for myself. I made sundry attempts while yet a lad, to procure employment in a counting-house, considering myself well fitted for the life of a merchant, but was uniformly rejected for giving too honest an account of my qualifications. I was kicked out of the house of a worthy mechanic who had received me as an apprentice, for telling him a disagreeable fact in relation to my mistress; and another, who was a member of a church and an enemy of my wronger, having received me into his employ, turned me out neck and heels, of a winter's day, for confessing that he cheated his customers.

“How I got along in life, carrying such a dead weight as veracity on my shoulders, you may well wonder; as I now do myself. Yet I have contrived, being of an ingenious turn, and full of speculations, to mount from my original humble station on a tailor's board to avocations of a much more dignified character; and, as I may say, I have tried my hand

at all the trades and professions, though with no great success in any. I once set up a shop, but ruined myself by telling my customers my goods were not of the best quality; and I lost an opportunity of making a great fortune, by admitting to a gentleman, who, in a great speculation I proposed, was to provide the means, that his money *might*, perhaps, go to Jerusalem.

“I picked up a knowledge of engineering, and lost my first rail-road by estimating the cost at the full amount; which caused my President and Directors to turn me off as an extravagant dog; while a rival, who reduced the estimate one half, got the appointment and ruined the company.

“I began business as a lawyer, and destroyed all my prospects, by admitting, in my first cause, that my client was a knave, and his claim good for nothing; all of which was exceedingly true; but I never had an opportunity to admit the same thing of a second.

“I clapped an M. D. to my name, but offended the few patients who at first encouraged me, by assuring them their complaints were trifling, and could be cured without physic.

“Nay, sir, I even tried my hand at divi-

nity, and might have been comfortably settled for life, had I not shocked my congregation by declaring that creeds, dogmas, and doctrines had nothing to do with religion, that good works were better than strong faith, and that the only duty of the just man was to revere Heaven and love his neighbours. For this frank admission, I was discarded by my flock, and excommunicated by the society.

“Sir, there is no end to the persecutions I have endured for truth’s sake. I have been slandered and vilified, ridiculed and beaten—twice caned, four times horse-whipped, and my nose pulled times without number—and all because I practised a virtue commended by every living soul, instilled into children at the fire-side and in the school-house, inculcated from the pulpit, and recommended by the reprobation so universally adjudged to its antagonist vice. You may ask what cause brought me to this place, since it must be a very extraordinary truth that can deserve the imputation of madness. I know not how that may be. It is possible, my truths were all moderate in their character, but it was their number my friends pleaded against me. They did not call me a madman, but they were certain I was—a fool. That, I suppose, was

the reason they sent me hither, to reflect on my past life, to marvel at the folly, injustice, and inconsistency of man, and to wonder why he should dignify with the name of virtues the qualities to which he awards the penalties of vices.—But this inconsistency is exemplified more or less strongly in the story of every unlucky person here present—perhaps of every inmate of this Asylum. I would venture a wager in any sum you please—provided I had it—that we might single out any person we pleased from among the multitude, with the certain assurance that his story, truly told, would be one more illustration added to the many you have heard, of the inconsistency of mankind on this particular subject.”

“No doubt of it,” said Mr. Ticklum; “and here, as it chanced, comes a new companion in misery, upon whom we may try the experiment.—There, you see, Simpkins, the rascally keeper, is turning the poor gentleman into the yard among us.”

It was as Mr. Ticklum said. At that moment, the gate was opened by one of the keepers, who thrust into the enclosure a very sad and solemn-looking stranger, who, approaching, dropt us a profound congee, and

then made as if he would have passed on to bury his woes in the remotest nook of the garden.

"Sir," said Mr. Ticklum, arresting him, "you are welcome to this place of captivity, where all are martyrs together. Sir," he added, putting on again the state of an editor, "we are an enemy of ceremony—Pray, sir, allow us to ask who you are?"

"I am," said the stranger, laying his hand on his heart very mournfully, "the most miserable man in the world."

"Sir," said Mr. Ticklum, making the new comer a bow, and looking as pathetic as he, "we are not in the habit of contradicting a gentleman by word of mouth: but allow us to say, you are mistaken. *We*, sir, are the most miserable man in the world!"

And as he spoke, *he* laid his hand on his breast.

"Upon my word, Mr. Ticklum," said the ex-member of Congress, interfering, with dignity, "you entirely forget yourself—It is *I* who am the most miserable man in the world."

"Except *me*," cried Mr. Frankman, looking very much offended: "I beg leave to say——"

“I beg your pardon, gentlemen,” exclaimed the duellist, whom the controversy roused from his silent bench, and brought again among us; “I thought I had long since satisfied you on that score. It is I, and I alone, who am the most miserable of men.”

“It is *I*, sir,” cried another; and the exclamation was echoed by half a dozen others, who came crowding up in confusion, preferring their claims to the distinction of misery. It seemed, indeed, as if the stranger’s confession of sorrows, with which, I fancy, he hoped to propitiate favour, possessed a virtue of another kind, and, like the pebble cast by Jason among the sons of the dragon’s teeth, was only destined to set my new friends by the ears.

It is not an uncommon thing for a man to boast, and even pride himself on, his woes; but I had no idea that absolute rivalry in affliction, the competition for its honours and advantages, ever extended beyond mendicants and poetasters, to whom sorrow and anguish are as the breath of their nostrils. My friends of the madhouse taught me the contrary, by insisting, each with increasing vehemence, that the glory of being the most miserable man in the world belong-

ed to him: the consequence of which was, first, a controversy extremely hot and vociferous, and then, notwithstanding my friendly endeavours to keep the peace, a furious contest, in which the editor knocked the congressman down, the critic pulled the duellist's nose, and honest John, my introducer, who had taken advantage of the story-telling to snatch a comfortable nap, started up, and called Mr. Frankman by a name highly insulting to a lover of the truth. In fact, I believe, they would soon have torn one another to pieces, and perhaps me too, had not the uproar brought the keepers into the yard to compose the quarrel:—a turn of affairs of which I took advantage by making my escape, the moment the gate was opened, from the enclosure and my friends.

THE
EXTRA LODGER.

CHAPTER I.

AMONG the numberless tyrants, in and out of office, who rule the sovereign American people with rods of iron, none can compare—whether it respects the despotic rigour of their rule, or the patient submissiveness of their subjects—with their High Mightinesses, the innkeepers. Steamboat captains, and stage-proprietors may, in their vanity, contest with them the claim to superiority in power; and, indeed, the undoubted privileges both these classes possess to maim and kill their customers at will, would seem to put them at the head of the powerful; but no honest, disinterested man who will consider all the circumstances, the power of the lordly Boniface over the comfort of his lodgers, and the uniform despotism of his rule, can hesitate to award the palm to their rivals. In other

lands, circumstances have degraded the lords of the spigot into a condition of subservience and vassalage to society; and they are insultingly regarded, and, incredible as it may appear, they even regard themselves as the servants of the public. Here, in this happy republic, where all are free but the people, they have assumed their proper attitude, as masters of their patrons, whom they rule with autocratic severity grievous to behold and lamentable to suffer. High and low, the princes of metropolitan hotels and the kings of the log-cabin tavern on the wayside, they know their power, and exercise it. The metropolitan potentates, indeed, sometimes affect a certain citizen-kinglike humility, and govern with decency and suavity; while it may be observed of the others, their compeers, that the lower you descend in rank among them, the more savage and irrespective becomes their tyranny. Thus, with the lord of your town inn, you may sometimes venture upon a little complaint of the cook and chamber-maid, without fear of being knocked down for impertinence; and, sometimes, in a village hotel, you may prefer a little expostulation on the subject of horse-meat and clean sheets, without the absolute certainty of being

turned into the streets. But even here we must not expect always to find our dignitaries in a good humour. The possession of power is a constant provocative to the exercise of it; and we know not when the monarch may put on his robes of state, and shake his sceptre of authority. It is but a little while, as every body knows, since a royal prince, with his whole cortége at his heels, was turned out of doors, or at least refused admission, by two different inkeepers, sceptre in hand. It is true, that, in both these instances, the royal personage was entirely unknown, being mistaken, in the one case, for an opera fiddler, in the other for something equally insignificant; otherwise mine hosts had been happy to kiss the dust from his royal shoes, out of a mere republican respect for greatness.

The king of the cabin—your true country tavern-keeper—is quite another sort of person, with whom to complain, to exhibit any symptoms of rebellious discontent, is to awake the sleeping lion. What cares he for your fine coat, your long dangling watch-chain, your gentlemanly swagger, your titles of distinction—your Colonel or General, your Doctor, your Reverend, your Honourable? You

are, sir, his customer—a suitor for meat and drink, which he graciously vouchsafes you, taking no consideration therefor, except a certain number of ninepences, or half-dollars, together with a due addition of reverence naturally belonging to the master of the house that shelters you. His house, though every chamber be reeking with mud and rain, is *his* house, and if you don't like it, you may leave it; his beds, though forty human souls, with boots on, may have nestled betwixt the unchanged sheets, doing battle all night with Incubus and Succuba, in the shape of those strange bedfellows with which misery makes us acquainted, have harboured your betters, and why therefore should *you* presume to grumble? His table, plentifully or sparingly covered as the case may be, with uneatable eatables—coffee made, or seeming to be made, of burnt blankets, sodden bread, stale bacon and palpitating chickens, greasy potatoes and withered turnip-tops—is the table that contents *him*, and if you don't like it you may go—to a place entirely unmentionable!

Truly, your republican innkeeper is the most mighty of tyrants. You may find him, sometimes, a very amiable personage, as great men sometimes will be; but take heed you

trifle not with his amiableness; for, verily, he is not a person to be trifled with by any rabblement traveller, for whom he does not care the snap of his independent fingers—no, not he.

In truth, the common country tavern-keepers—those especially in new regions, or at a distance from the great towns—are, for the most part, mere farmers, who have been driven by sheer necessity (not poverty) to open their houses to the public. In very few parts of the land is the country densely enough settled, and the travelling sufficiently great, to support lines of taverns along the roads at convenient distances. The farmer must hang out the bush and play the landlord, or be eaten up by his hospitality. He knows nothing of cooking or housekeeping beyond what he has been accustomed to in his own family, and he cares nothing about learning; in half the instances, he would prefer the traveller's room to his company: it is not therefore surprising his hotel should not be the best in the world, nor himself the most obliging of landlords.

With this condition of things prevailing, it is evident one must not look for any exemptions of the charming rural hostelries,

the little hawthorn-crowned alehouse, so long embalmed in the pages of English poets and novelists, with its proper familiars, the facetious host, his buxom wife, and trim daughter, all obsequious, bustling, eager to make themselves, and their house, and every thing in it, agreeable to your honour. You cannot here say, with any propriety, you will take your ease in your inn, that being the privilege solely of its master; nor can you have any greater expectation of comfort, which is an article seldom put down in the bill of fare. In brief, one should expect nothing; and to the inexperienced traveller I recommend the maxim which observation has shown me to be productive of the best effects in mollifying evils, as well as preventing a hundred inconveniences that might otherwise occur:—Be submissive; graciously receive, thankfully suffer, pay your money, and depart in peace.

It was once my fate to pass a night in a certain wayside caravansary, among the mountains of Virginia, a lowly and logly habitation, from whose mean appearance no one would have inferred the majestic spirit of the ruler within; up—or rather down to which—for it stood at the bottom of a hill—one fine evening in September, rolled a mail-

coach, well crammed with passengers, of whom I, for my sins, was one. We numbered twelve souls in all, nine inside, and three out; of which latter group, I, being somewhat a valetudinarian, was honoured with a seat beside his highness of the whip; while my two companions, the one a Mississippian, the other a varmint, as he called himself, of Tennessee, sat gallantly upon the top, where they rolled and pitched about, as we thundered down the rocky road, in a manner admirable to behold—or, as the Mississippian expressed it, “like two short tailed dogs in a boiling pot”—a resemblance that was somewhat the stronger for the tremendous bow-woughs and yelpings, with which he—sometimes assisted by the Tennessean—beguiled the weariness of the way.

Certainly, there never was a jollier set of rantipole personages got together in a mail-stage before. Besides the Mississippian yelping on the top, there was another of the same tribe on the inside, who could imitate the braying of an ass to perfection—a melody which he kept up in rivalry with his friend and partner aloft. Add to these an Alabamian who sang negro songs; a Rock River Illinois, who whooped like an Indian; a Tex-

ian that played the mestang, or wild horse of the prairies, and, besides kicking the bottom nearly from the stage, neighed and whinneyed till the very team-horses on the road responded to the note; and five others who did nothing but scream and laugh to fill up the concert; and you have before you a set of the happiest madbrained roisterers that ever astonished the monarch of a stage house.

At this place we were destined to sup and lodge; and accordingly, in due course of time, we were all seated at the board, where we had the satisfaction of being tyrannized over both by mine host and mine hostess, the one glum yet facetious, the other ugly as ill-temper, and haughty as a princess. There was nothing at all remarkable in the supper, which was no better nor worse than usual, except the total absence of that *sine qua non* of a Virginia table, fried chickens—and, indeed, of chickens in every shape, there not being so much as a wing or claw on the table. This omission producing a gentle interrogatory, somewhat in the tone of expostulation, from one of the Mississippians, (who, as well as all the other travellers, it is proper to say, was now playing the part of a very modest well behaved young gentleman,) mine host

very wittily gave us to understand, "it was all our own fault, seeing that the diabolical noise we had made, while approaching the house, had scared all his fowls into the mountains." This, the Mississippian declared, "reminded him of Captain Dobbs's chickens in Kentucky, which, he had the Captain's own words for it, no sooner caught sight of a traveller approaching, than they immediately took to their heels; being well aware, from long experience, as Captain Dobbs said, that the visit of a stranger was certain death to them."

Before we had finished supper, a thirteenth guest made his appearance—a tall rawboned Yankee pedler, it seemed, who drove up in his little wagon through a shower that had begun to fall, and presently entered the supper-room, bearing a pair of saddle-bags which he laid beside him with great care, as if afraid its contents should be injured, if placed out of his protection. He had a very meek, solemn, unpresuming, solitary look, and rather sneaked into than took a chair at the foot of the table; where he waited very submissively for the cup of coffee, which my landlady deigned, after sundry contemptuous looks, and five minutes of delay, to send him. On

the whole, he did not seem to produce any more favourable impression upon my fellow travellers, who left him to consume his chickenless supper by himself, while they proceeded to the bar-room to resolve a doubt which had entered the head of the Mississippian, Captain's Dobbs's friend—to wit, whether the thunder of their approach had not killed all the mint-plants, and so deprived them of their juleps. This was fortunately proved not to be the case: the young gentlemen concocted their sleeping draughts, smoked their segars, settled the affairs of the nation, and then, having received a hint that such was the will and pleasure of the landlord, ascended to the traveller's room to seek their beds.

THE EXTRA LODGER.

CHAPTER II.

THIS traveller's room was the garret, or the half thereof, the other moiety being partitioned off, and applied to some other purpose; and as it was neither ceiled nor plastered, it presented no very striking look of luxury or comfort. But it exhibited the rare and captivating spectacle of a dozen different beds, in which each man was to possess, for one night at least, the happiness of sleeping without a bedfellow. The beds were, moreover, all single ones, one only excepted, which was neither single nor double, and, indeed, was a mere plank stretched between two stools, with a feather-bed hung over it, panner-wise; and so far, it appeared to us, that our landlord, even in his out-of-the-world nook, must have been visited with some inklings of civilization; but upon further con-

sideration, it was agreed, we owed the size, as well as the number of the couches, to the necessity of the case, the garret being of such a figure as to stow a dozen truckle-beds much more commodiously than half that number of double ones.

Nevertheless, we were all well pleased with the arrangement; nor did any difficulty present itself, until the braying gentleman, regaling us first with a moderate burst of his music, by way of calling attention, demanded "Who the nation was to sleep with the Yankee?" a question that no one answered, until he had first popped into, and so secured possession of, his cot; after which, each swore, with an oath as terrible as was ever sworn in Flanders, the Yankee should not sleep with *him*. Upon this point the determination was quite unanimous. I might, indeed, except myself, having made no rash vow on the occasion; which was the more unnecessary as I had, partly by accident, and partly from choice, fallen heir to the narrow bed of plank, spoken of before, in which there was no fear of my being troubled with a bed-fellow.

We had scarce arranged this important matter, when the supernumerary guest and

extra lodger, who had perhaps been detained securing his property for the night, came up stairs, bearing his saddle-bags and a candle, and with hesitating step and modest countenance, stole through the room, looking for an empty bed, but of course without finding any.

“Perhaps, gentlemen,” said he, with an extremely solemn, wo-begone voice, of inquiry, “some of you can tell me where I am to sleep to-night?”

“In paradise, I suppose,” said the braying gentleman; “for I’ll be hanged if there’s any room for you here. You see, the beds are all full.”

“I do,” quoth the stranger, looking disconsolately round, “and they are shocking narrow ones, too. But I rather calculate, the landlord meant me to have half a one, some where or other among you?”

“Well, that seems but reasonable,” said the Mississippian; “and I should be very willing to let you have half of mine; only—” here he turned over the bed clothes and displayed a huge bowie-knife lying on one side of him, and a pistol on the other—“only that I never sleep without my arms, and they are somewhat dangerous when I dream at night,

as I always do after a bad supper.—'Pon my soul, sir, I always dream the niggers are murdering me, and so fall to at 'em in a way that's quite a caution! 'Pon my soul, sir, if you had seen me, how I slashed the bed to pieces last night, and shot off the bed-post! Had to pay ten dollars damages to old Skinflint, the landlord!"

The Yankee recoiled with trepidation from this perilous bedfellow, and preferred his request to the Tennessean, representing very piteously, that he had an "affection of the head"—though of what kind he did not inform us—which was always aggravated by want of, or even by uncomfortable, sleep. The Tennessean, however, swore he was just as bad as his neighbour, the Mississippian, though in another way; he never could sleep with any body, without beginning to fight, the moment he fell asleep; and it was but a fortnight ago, he said, that he had gouged an unlucky bedfellow's eyes out.

The Alabamian declared he chewed tobacco in his sleep, and that his quids were to the full as dangerous to a bedmate's eyes as the Tennessean's fingers. The second Mississippian had taken a position directly across the bed, his head sticking out on one side, his

legs on the other, in which position only, he swore, he could sleep with any comfort; and therefore desired the Yankee to apply to some one else; which he did, though with no better fortune, some excusing themselves on pretences as ridiculous as those I have mentioned, while one or two others, whose wit was not so ready, met his supplicating glances and hesitating applications with downright refusals. As for myself, the narrowness of my couch was so manifest, as to secure me from application.

The poor Yankee, thus rejected on all sides, and with the prospect of remaining bedless for the night, took the desperate resolution of preferring a complaint to his majesty the innkeeper. For this purpose, he opened the door, and called twice or thrice, but with timid tones, to mine host; who, having already retired to his bed, and not choosing to be troubled, took no notice of the first calls, and only replied to the last by threatening to turn his unfortunate customer out of the house, if he did not keep quiet.

To be turned out of a house in which he was so inhospitably treated, might have seemed no very disagreeable alternative; but, unluckily, a dismal rain had now commenced,

falling, and there was no other place of refuge within eight or ten miles.

Nothing remained for the extra lodger but to stretch himself upon the floor; which he at last did, but with sundry groans and complaints, pillowing his head upon his saddle bags; in which position he lay until his fellow-travellers, myself with the rest, had all dropt sound asleep.

We had not slept, I imagine, more than a quarter of an hour, when we were all, at the same moment, roused up by a terrible voice crying, in the midst of the room, "If there's no other way with them, cut their aristocratic throats!"

The words and voice were alike alarming; but judge our astonishment when, starting from our beds, we beheld the Yankee, rising half naked from the floor, as grim and gaunt as Don Quixotte himself, holding a bowie-knife, to which the Mississippian's was as a penknife to a razor, and brandishing it with looks of blood and fury. "By snakes and niggers!" cried the braying gentleman, with something like alarm, "he dreams harder than I do!"

"Wake him up, he'll do a mischief," exclaimed others; for we all thought the poor

fellow was suffering under some frightful dream.

The Tennessean, bolder than the rest, seized him by the arm; upon which he dropped his knife, and, his countenance changing from rage to trepidation, immediately exclaimed,—“ I give myself up; I am your prisoner. But take notice, gentlemen, and bear witness for me, I yield to superior force—Give me five minutes to say my prayers !”

“ Death and thunder !” cried the Varmint of Tennessee, starting back, “ the man is mad !”

And so, indeed, it seemed to us all.

“ Give me five minutes to say my prayers,” quoth the Yankee; who, however, instead of dropping upon his knees to pray, burst into tears, and harangued us in somewhat the following words: “ I am an honest man and patriot, a democrat and man of the people: I have fought the battle of my country, and I die a Roman hero. You are too many for me, gentlemen—twelve hundred men against one, and a regiment of scalping savages behind you ! I surrender, and I am ready to die. I am a democrat. But what is one democrat among twelve hundred hired myrmidons of power ? I know you’ll kill me, but I don’t

care: all I ask of you is to do justice to my memory, to bear witness before the world"—(here his voice was almost drowned in sobs,)—"to bear witness that I die like a brave man—die like a hero—die like a patriot—the victim of despots and martyr of freedom!"

Great were the consternation and confusion that now prevailed. The man was mad—mad north-north-west, and all round the compass, politically mad—a mad patriot; nobody doubted that. Some asked, what was to be done: others would have argued the madman out of his frenzy; others again slipped out of the door, and stood ready for a run.

In the meanwhile, the maniac, reinspired by his own eloquence, or the pusillanimity of his enemies, which even a madman might perceive, lifted up his voice again, but lifted it in a tone of defiance.

"You are the hired myrmidons of power!" he cried, "purse-proud rich men—tyrants that grind the face of the poor—that live on the sweat of the poor man's labour, and rob his hungry children of their food! I am a poor man, and the poor man's friend: I hate you, I defy you, I call you to the reckoning. Yes!" he roared, snatching up his knife from the floor, and then waving it aloft, as if to

unseen backers; "your triumph is now over, your hour has come: I call you to the reckoning—to the reckoning of blood!—Advance, men of the people, and cut their tyrannical throats!"

And with that, he advanced himself, flourishing his ferocious weapon against our aristocratic breasts. There was no withstanding that terrific charge: pellmell we went, one over the other, out the door, which we esteemed ourselves fortunate in being able to close, and thus secure upon the distracted assailant.

We then made our way down to the bar-room, where we found the glum host and his haughty spouse in as great alarm and as elegant deshabelle as ourselves, they, and, indeed, every soul in the house, having been aroused by the madman's vociferations.

What was now to be done? The unfortunate man was still raging; we could hear him thumping against the door, as if endeavouring to break through, and roaring all the while a frenzied cry of "victory!" With that savage knife in his hand—nay, with a dozen knives perhaps—for arms and clothes were all, in the hurry of our flight, left together in the room—who should dare attack

and disarm him? Nobody showed an appetite for the enterprise; and although the ugly landlady proposed, in her ecstasy of terror, a plan that might have ended the difficulty—namely, that some of us should take her husband's gun, and *shoot* the bedlamite through the key hole, (and, really, she did not seem to consider the shooting a mad Yankee any very atrocious crime,)—the business was ended by our sitting up all night in the bar-room, in extremely simple costume, debating the difficulty.

The terrible din with which we had been ousted from the garret, did not continue long; but was succeeded, first, by a dead, portentous calm, then by a strange half groaning, half snorting kind of noise, that was represented by some who had the courage once or twice to creep slyly to the garret door to listen, to be peculiarly terrific, and which, indeed, lasted all night long.

When the morning broke, we held another consultation, and finally, growing more courageous as the day grew broader, wrought ourselves to the resolution of proceeding in a body to the traveller's room, the landlord magnanimously leading the van, armed with a broad-axe; ourselves intrepidly following at

his heels, some carrying such means of defence as could be gathered up, and others cart-ropes and bed-cords to tie the madman, and mine hostess behind with a bulldog. We paused a moment at the door, listening to the groaning sound, which was still kept up, and then softly entered the room; where we had the satisfaction of finding the poor fellow lying very soundly and comfortably asleep in the best bed, sending from his upturned nostrils those anomalous and horrid sounds, which now appeared to us the natural music of sleep. He opened his eyes, stared upon us somewhat inquiringly, yet with a look so extremely natural and lucid that we refrained from laying hands upon him, as we supposed would have been necessary.

“Good morning, gentlemen,” said he, quite like a sensible person; “a fine morning we have after the rain. And a very fine sleep I’ve had too,” he added: “I hope you can say the same?”

“It’s his lucid moment, poor devil,” said the Varmint; and gathering up our indispensables, we all went down to breakfast.

The Yankee was now the observed of all observers—as solemn, as sad, as modest as

ever, and to all appearances, quite unconscious of his late paroxysm. We were all too prudent, or generous, to remind him of it, even by a distant hint; and, for the same reasons, we all took care not to cross him in any thing at table. Whatever dish he looked at was immediately surrendered to him; even the ugly landlady requested his acceptance of a tumbler of cream she had poured out for her own use, but on which he chanced to cast his eye. And thus it happened that our gentleman, whose appetite had by no means suffered from his affliction, ate the best, as well as the hugest breakfast of all; after which, he ordered his horse, called for and paid his bill, with every air of sanity; and then, with every air of sanity, departed.

A few moments after, we were ourselves upon the road thundering along in our mail-coach; and by and by caught sight of our extra lodger on the top of a hill, at a cross road, where, indeed, he seemed waiting for us, as he looked back upon us frequently, while we slowly mounted the hill.

“Mad again!” quoth the braying gentleman, with an air of commiseration—“Poor devil!”

“Gentlemen,” said the madman, touching

his hat with an air of great suavity, and giving the sweetest intonation to his sepulchral voice, "I believe I forgot to bid you farewell: at all events, I omitted to express my thanks for the uncommon kindness you all displayed in giving me, a poor afflicted Yankee pedler, so much more bed-room than I had any occasion for."

"Oh," said the Tennessean, having some doubt about the poor fellow's meaning, but willing to humour him to the best of his power—"it is our southern way; hospitality, sir, mere hospitality."

"Sir," said the pedler, with a grateful look, "I shall always remember it. But I do assure you, one bed would have served my purpose just as well as a dozen."

"No doubt, sir," said the Varmint; "but the truth is, as you were a sick man ——"

"Only a little affliction in my head," said the stranger, touching his cracked *os frontis*.

"Yes, sir—a little affliction"—rejoined the Tennessean; "for which reason, each man desired to give you his bed; and *that*," added the gentleman, pleased at his ingenuity, "is the reason you had all the beds!"

The pedler gave us a satanic grin, and touching his forehead again, exclaimed, after

sneezing and blowing his nose in a highly natural manner, "Remember me, gentlemen! I have an affliction here, to be sure, but—I never lost a bed by it!"

With that, he whipped up his horse, and cheering him on the way with a laugh that sounded like the chuckle of a kettle-drum, it was so deep and tremendous, left us to our meditations.

"Bitten!" said the Varmint, giving a sneaking look around him.

"Choused out of bed—humbugged, every man of us!" growled the Alabamian.

The Mississippian jumped on his feet, and roaring—"Bray, gentlemen, bray—we are all jackasses together!" set us the example, by pouring his most exquisitely donkeyish note upon the ears of morning.

THE ARKANSAS EMIGRANTS.

CHAPTER I.

FIFTY years ago, a philosopher sitting in his closet constructing the political horoscope of our new-born nation, proved most decidedly, among other undeniable propositions, that the Kentucky and Niagara lands, then all the rage among emigrants, must continue to be *frontier* lands for a century to come, and deplored the infatuation of men who—neglecting the unoccupied lands east of the mountains, of which there were enough and more than enough for the wants of many generations—exiled themselves to such distant places, where they must “never more hope to see their parents, their brothers and sisters, and other relations and friends whom they left behind,” where, during all that coming century, themselves, and their children after them, must fight with desperate savages for

the privilege of sowing and reaping their corn-fields; and where, worst of all, after the trouble of fighting and reaping, they must, for lack of a market, sell their wheat for tenpence a bushel, to buy dollar-blankets at half a guinea apiece.

To us, who in half a century have seen it so signally falsified, the prediction appears sufficiently ridiculous. The "wilderness countries" now form the heart and centre of the republic, and are, in the language of speculation, an *old* country, whence new emigrants daily depart for a new border; which, in its turn, becomes, in a few years, a cordon of sovereign states, sending out, in like manner, their hosts of voluntary exiles.

And thus the work goes on—the building up of a nation such as the world has never yet seen, such as it has never yet imagined. Croakers sit at home and prate of dangers from abroad, of political corruption and social disorganization, as heralds of coming convulsion; but, all the while, the emigrant is on the road, with his plough and ox, his axe and rifle, his sons and daughters, to add a new state to the confederacy, a new arm to the Briareus of nations whom no Jupiter can hurl from the seat of power, no *Ætna*

overwhelm. The roads are full of teams, the rivers alive with steamboats: turn where you will, you see no gap in the human billow, which, rolling from the east like the bore of a mighty river, the rushing *mascaret* of the Amazon or the Ganges, sweeps over forest and prairie, in its march to the Pacific Ocean. When that has been gained, when the Oregon boasts as many steamers as the Mississippi, and the Chippewyans are as well pierced with railroads as the Alleghanies, we may look into the magician's glass for the fate of the enormous empire—or rather for the fate of other empires, its outstripped and overshadowed rivals.

The rage of emigration, of which we need not leave our homes to witness the effects, one is almost tempted to consider a feature peculiar to the American race. Pressed by no actual necessity—no pinching poverty, such as drives the poor Irishman from his moorland cot, no galling oppression of tyrant and bigot, only to be escaped by expatriation; yet ever changing, ever on the march, seeking a new home; it would really seem as if there was something *nomadic* in our natures, a principle of levity and restlessness, from which the philosopher may, according to his mood,

augur a superabundance of good or evil for the republic. I have sometimes, while rambling among the long trains of emigrant wagons filling a southern or western road, asked myself whether the love of home—that tender, and lovely, and soul-enriching sentiment, so distinctive of the race from which we boast to descend—was not a poetic fiction in America. Those men of substance—that Virginia planter with his hundred slaves, journeying to the cotton-grounds of Alabama; that comfortable farmer of Pennsylvania, with his half a dozen wagons, and furniture in them enough to furnish out a garrison, wending his way to the distant Wisconsin;—do these men remember with no regretful longings the antique manor-house on the Rappahannock, the old home-stead among the blue hills of Susquehanna? The Virginian will tell you, his lands are worn out, and that he left them to save his “hands” from starvation, or the market; the Pennsylvanian assures you, he has seven sons to be made landholders at his death. Ask that gallant New-Yorker what carries *him* so far from home—he is going to buy up the site of a county-town, and convert five thousand dollars into a million: that young lawyer from Maryland—he

wants to get into the legislature, and thence to Congress: that bustling Yankee—he will be a merchant, and make his fortune. In short, you will learn any thing, except that the adventurers regret the homes they have left behind them. The love of novelty; the love of freedom—that freedom which men feel upon the boundless prairie, or in the measureless forest, where the soul hath elbow-room, and is not conscious of too many superiors—and the love of wealth, have swallowed up the gentler love of the place of birth.

Yet all are not thus insensible. Poverty, defeated hopes, humbled pride, send also their representatives to the border, among whom one may sometimes see an eye turned in tears to the blue horizon behind, and visages full of the thoughts of home—of home remembered as a lost paradise, dearer than any thing to be gained in the land of promise.

One evening, rambling upon a bluff on the Mississippi, it was my chance to witness the embarkation of a family of emigrants, whom I had previously noticed descending to the boat, which was to carry them across the river to the dark frowning forests of Arkansas. It was a spring evening, and the season and

the hour united to give beauty to the scene. Upon the bluff, groves of locust-trees shed a delicious perfume; and the glories of sunset lay upon the woods beyond the river. It was at this pleasant hour, that the family, consisting of five persons—the father, a man declining into the vale of years; three sons, one a mere urchin of six or seven years old, the others youths of eighteen and twenty; and a daughter of perhaps seventeen—descended to the river. The daughter, with the little boy, was packed away in a carriole—or in western parlance, carry-all—of no very distinguished appearance, driven by a gray-headed old negro servant. The father and second son rode on horseback; while the first-born, with a second negro, trudged manfully along on foot.

There was nothing, at first sight, very peculiar in the appearance of the family; but, by and by, the daughter getting out, to walk down the hill with her eldest brother, I observed her look wistfully backwards, until a jerk from the brother—a fiery and impatient youth compelled her to proceed. I fancied I could perceive a quivering of her lip, as she turned from the eastern sky; but, at all events, there was something in her countenance, its beauty

and melancholy air, perhaps—which, notwithstanding her plain attire—indeed, the clothes of all were of the plainest materials—and the general look of poverty about the little train, almost convinced me they had once known their better days.

They reached the river; the carriage was driven into the boat, which was pushed from the shore. At that moment, an idle youth who had strolled from the village near, and taken his seat under a locust-tree on the edge of the bluff, began to play upon a flute which he had brought with him; and, as it happened, his first tune was the tender and well known melody, of “Home, sweet Home.” The notes reached the departing family, and what a world of memories seemed suddenly to be conjured among them ! The daughter started up, and with a wild cry sprang towards the shore; and, would, indeed, have fallen into the river, but for the father who caught her in his arms. For a moment, all was agitation on board the little bark; the brothers pressed to their sister’s side, one, it seemed, to reprove, the other to console and soothe, but all expressing in their countenances a world of longing regret for the home they had left, never perhaps again to see.

How rapidly fancy, awakened by that thrilling cry, read in the visages of the emigrants—that gray old man, so stern yet sorrowing; the daughter clinging to his neck, yet still gazing wildly back to the receding shore; the second son lifting his little brother into his arms, and covering him with kisses; the first-born looking so cold and haughty, yet unhappy—how rapidly fancy traced the whole history of the little family. You could not mistake that old man, bearing himself, in his sorrow, so loftily. He is a Virginian—an “old Virginian”—one of the fine old race of past days—a gentleman, but an unfortunate one. You see him in his brave old house at home. It is on the Potomac, perched upon a hill, overshadowed by oaks and pines, planted by a grandsire some five or six generations removed: his negro-quarters make a village; and so do his stables; for truly he delights in his horse-flesh, and looks with contempt on Congressmen. He hath his friends about him, a multitude of goodly people old and young, cavaliers that know the points of a horse or bottle of champagne; and dames and beaux that devote the days to picnicking and the nights to dancing. If a stranger passeth him by, he sendeth, or goeth, out to entreat the

honour of his company. His eldest son reads law and runs races, in preparation for the legislature; his second has some thoughts of doing the same, but is in no hurry, and, in the meanwhile, squires his sister to and fro, and writes verses for the young ladies; his sister laughs her life away in the dance and on horseback, and jeers at a despairing lover, for whom she would at any serious moment jump into the river; and the little boy spins his top and twirls his marbles, or plays cockhorse with Sambo or Jimbo, whom he trounces whenever he tires of their assistance. All is joy and jollity in the old gentleman's house; and when he hears his neighbours complain of hard times, or reads the melancholy croakings in his county newspaper, he says, "men are blockheads," swears "the world turns round to-day as it did the day before," and orders old Cæsar to bring him some fresh mint and a bottle of brandy.

In the meanwhile, a storm is brewing: crops fail, the races are run wrong; there are some rascally mortgages that plague him, and bonds and notes of hand have fallen due at the most unexpected moment. He receives letters from persons whom he calls "pitiful fellows," and others again throw him

into a passion. He is visited by lawyers, who are agreeable at dinner, but throw him into such a ferment before departing, that he flings his son's law-books out the window, swearing, "no son of his shall become a rascally attorney." Finally, the sheriff visits him, and then he is—ruined. His horses gone—his negroes, his lands, his father's house—all departed from him, the proud old man turns his face to the wilderness—to the furthest wilderness—where he may, with less shame, descend to the labour that is to repair his broken fortunes.

And here he is, at last, upon the Mississippi, his wilderness in sight, his eye turned back like his childrens', his brain busy with the old days, his heart—ay, all their hearts, full of home and Virginia. You may read his thoughts: he thinks of his proud domains, the inheritance of his children, now in the possession of a stranger; of the log-cabin, in which he must bury the daughter of his pride and affections; and his heart sickens at the vision.

His sons remember their horses and hounds, their balls and their barbecues, their wealth and influence, their brilliant hopes and towering prospects, and contrast them with

the life of toil and obscurity to which they are hastening, never, perhaps, to emerge from it. Their sister thinks—of what? Ah, yes, of her lover! She hears his footstep on the gravel-walk at home, the tramp of his horse in the old avenue, his vows of affection are still ringing in her ears—ringing, while the rush of the Mississippi against his farther bank, and the crash of falling trees, awake her to a consciousness of separation.

The boat touches the strand: they are in Arkansas; where fancy as readily pictures the final history of the whole family. The father will prosper; he will be again a wealthy planter, with a hundred negroes around him; and in ten years he will go to Congress; not that he loves Congress any more than ever, but that he may take a peep at Virginia, on the way, and show “the knaves who ruined him” how they have made his fortune; they shall see him richer, and higher, and prouder, than ever. His sons—alas, the second one will die in a year, of fever; the first-born, so fierce of aspect and temper, will, still earlier, perhaps, perish in a brawl, the victim of a bowie-knife. The boy, under the gentle influence of his sister, will grow up less wild and wayward, and in him the father will be

content, and cease to grieve for his first-born. As for the daughter, so melancholy, yet so beautiful, she will—marry and forget her sorrows.

THE
FASCINATING POWER OF REPTILES.

CHAPTER I.

It was once my fortune to be arrested by floods, in a certain village of the southwest; where, there being few other means of amusement in my power, I was glad to take refuge in the woods, rambling repeatedly among the grand old trees, and penetrating into shadowy solitudes, where the strange and mournful hum of locusts, perched in myriads among the boughs, was mingled with the chirp of nesting birds and the rustle of snakes and rabbits, driven by the waters from their favourite swamps.

In the course of one of these rambles, my ears were saluted by a sudden squeaking and wailing, of a very direful character, which I by and by found proceeded from a catbird, whose motions attracted my attention. She was fluttering about a bush, occasionally

darting to the ground, from which she rose with a shriek, to flutter and dart again; and, in short, betraying so much, and such unusual, agitation, that my curiosity was aroused, and I stepped forward to unravel the mystery.

The mystery was soon explained. Beneath the bush, was a huge black snake, swaying his head to and fro among the branches, as if looking for the easiest means of climbing it; or, perhaps, engaged in wheedling, serpent-like, the poor catbird to descend—at all events so much engrossed in his occupation, whatever it may have been, as to take no notice of my approach—a slight which I immediately avenged by catching up a stick and despatching him at a blow.

“Bravo!” cried the catbird, or seemed to cry it: certainly, she uttered a squeak strongly expressive of delight, and fluttered and tumbled about my head in a very antic and familiar way, chirping and chattering what I could not doubt were meant to be grateful thanks for the service I had rendered her; and then darted into the bush, where I found her nest, containing three or four callow young, which she suffered me to look at, and even to handle, without seeming to be greatly

alarmed, or even moving more than a yard or two from the bush.—It is a pity, poor cat-bird, thou hast so greymalkin a voice ! Were it not for that, no bird would be a greater favourite with man. None shows such a predilection of his society, none so much confidence in his honour and generosity; and none, while admitting his familiarities with her young, will more jealously and courageously defend them from the attack of enemies.

I sat down upon a fallen tree hard by, to ponder upon these things—upon the good act I had performed, and upon a question which obtruded itself into my mind, namely, whether this might not have been a case of *charming*, of which I had previously heard, and read, so much. It *might* be, for aught I could tell, that the black-snake had been throwing his spells around the poor bird; but, it was quite as probable, the sable sinner was simply climbing towards the nest, to make a dinner of her young—an attempt sufficient of itself to account for all her maternal agitation.

This little incident threw my mind into a train of thought on the subject of reptile fascination, which—the dead snake lying at my side, the happy mother chirping in

her bush hard by—I indulged in, until I arrived at the results to which I have endeavoured to give expression in the following chapters.

THE
FASCINATING POWER OF REPTILES.

CHAPTER II.

FOR six thousand years—that is to say, ever since the old serpent beguiled mother Eve in the garden—the existence of the fascinating faculty has been a subject of controversy betwixt the *profanum vulgus* and the sages of science, the one affirming the fact as a thing observed, the other denying it, upon the strength of arguments drawn from its apparent impossibility. At the present day, the question stands precisely where it did in the beginning; the vulgar observing and affirming as before, the wise man arguing and denying: and in this vexed condition it may perhaps remain for six thousand years longer, unless it should be my good fortune in these present pages, to settle the difficulty and lay the question at rest forever.

And, first, I profess to be a profound and

devout believer in the whole doctrine of fascination; having quite satisfied my mind, after a long course of observation and inquiry, that the faculty in question does exist, and has existed from the remotest ages, in the reptile family, to which I am inclined to limit it. I am not, indeed, ignorant of the claims of animals of another class to the possession of the faculty—for example, the Syrens and Lamiaë of ancient days, and the Mermaids of a later period: but as the Syrens and Mermaids enchanted merely with fine music, the “dulcet and harmonious breath,” with which even a mortal may draw souls of out men’s bodies; and as the Lamiaë were half-snake at the best; I think, they cannot be ranked in the same category with animals that charm—like Greek Sorcerers and Yankee Magnetizers—by the mere force of a look, the magic of an evil eye. Such are your true fascinators; and such belong only to the reptile race.

All reptiles seem, in former times, to have been considered charmers; but the faculty is now claimed to exist only among a few species—the *cobra* of Africa and India, (the supposed *basilisk* of the ancients,) the European viper, and the rattlesnake and blacksnake of America; of which the two last are, by general

consent, placed at the head of the tribe, as possessing much higher, and more frequently employed, powers of fascination than the others. Their supremacy over the others named, I do not doubt; but, as I am of opinion the list of fascinating reptiles is much more extensive than is generally supposed, so also I believe that there are other reptiles, not hitherto suspected as charmers, that possess the faculty in a still higher degree of perfection.

The facts upon which observers have founded their belief, will naturally form the first subject of attention; many of these being, apart from their extraordinariness, of a character so well attested, that a very great philosopher, no less a man than Sir Hans Sloane, the founder of the British Museum, declared "there was no reason to question them." Indeed, the facts themselves seem to be pretty generally admitted among the philosophers; who confine their opposition chiefly to the inferences, and seek, by explanations of their own, to rob the reptile of his virtue, and his exploits of their marvel and mystery. But let us examine the facts first, and the explanations afterwards.

The chief victims of the magical power

are supposed to be the smaller birds and animals—sparrows, catbirds, dormice, squirrels, “and such like; which though sitting upon the branch of a tree of considerable height,” says the philosopher above mentioned, “shall, by such steadfast or earnest looking of the snake, fall dead into his mouth.”

According to the more modern belief, the charmed animal makes many, though unavailing, efforts to break through the bonds of fascination, the birds, in particular, fluttering for a long time around the destroyer, before they finally drop into his remorseless jaws. Instances of the fascination of such small creatures are extremely numerous, and authenticated by persons of the greatest respectability. Thus we have an instance of the charming of a bluejay by a black snake, endorsed by the Rev. President Dwight; another of a squirrel, authenticated by Mr. Chief Justice Dudley of Massachusetts, a Fellow of the Royal Society; and twenty similar ones by Professor Kalm; not to speak of other persons of equal weight of character. A very circumstantial account is given by Dr. Todd, of Vermont, of a case—it might almost be called a *double* case of fascination—witnessed by himself, and chroni-

pled by the philosophic Samuel Williams, LL. D., in his Natural and Civil History of that state—a gentleman who laid the scientific world under obligation by actually counting the leaves on a maple tree! a feat of arithmetical dexterity only rivalled by the exploit of old Tom Fuller, the (in his day) celebrated negro calculator of Virginia, who began his mathematical studies by counting *the hairs on a cow's tail!**

“Walking,” says Dr. Todd, “in a field in

* The powers of mental calculation possessed by this poor negro, who could *neither read nor write*, and who—to show that his own laborious exertions, and no miracle of nature, had made him what he was—could remember the time when he thought himself “a very clever fellow,” upon having learned to count a hundred, were very extraordinary indeed; and in the rapidity with which he arrived at his results, he has, perhaps, never been surpassed by any other calculating machine, human or mechanical. To the question, “how many seconds a man had lived, who was 70 years, 17 days, and 12 hours old,” he returned a correct answer in the short space of *a minute and a half*. This calculation was, at the same time, made in the usual way, with pen and paper, by one of the gentlemen present, who told old Tom, “he was wrong, and that the sum was not so great as he had said;” upon which the old man hastily replied, “Top, massa, you forget *de leap year*.” On adding the seconds of the leap years to the others, the amount of the whole in both their sums agreed exactly.

To this note I will merely add, for the satisfaction of the inquisitive, that Dr. Williams found 21,192 leaves on the maple, and old Tom Fuller 2,872 hairs on the cow's tail.

Connecticut, near a small grove of walnut trees, I saw a sparrow circling in the air, just in the margin of the wood, and making dreadful moans of distress. Immediately the former circumstances occurred," (he had seen an instance of charming in his boyhood, but had been frightened away by the charmer,) "and I approached with caution within twenty feet of a black snake, about seven feet long, having a white throat, and of the kind which the people there call *runners* or *choking-snakes*. The snake lay stretched out in a still posture: I viewed him and the bird near half an hour. The bird, in every turn in its flight, descended nearer the object of its terror, until it approached the mouth of the serpent. The snake, by a quick motion of its head, seized the bird by the feathers, and plucked out several. The bird flew off a few feet, but quickly returned. The snake continued to pluck the feathers at every flight of the bird, until it could no longer fly. The bird would then hop up to the snake and from him, until it had not a feather left, except on its wings and head. The snake now killed it by breaking its neck, by an amazing sudden motion: he did not devour it, but cast it a little off, and continued his station. Now the tragedy

was to be again repeated; for another bird of the same kind, which had shown signs of distress during the first tragedy, was fascinated to the jaws of the monster in the same circling manner as the former, and suffered the loss of some feathers. I could no longer stand neuter. With indignation I attacked the hated reptile; but he escaped me. The living bird was liberated from his fangs. The dead one I picked up and showed to my friends, destitute of feathers as before mentioned."

One may judge of the wondrous strength of the charm exercised in this instance, when we find the poor sparrows holding still to be *plucked*, as well as eaten.

Equally circumstantial is the account given by Colonel Beverly, in his history of Virginia, of the charming of a hare (*Americé*, rabbit,) by a rattlesnake, a spectacle witnessed by himself and two other gentlemen, his companions. "It happened thus," quoth the historian: "One of the company, in his search for the best cherries," (they had ridden into an orchard by the roadside,) "espied the hare sitting: and although he went close by her, she did not move, till he (not suspecting the occasion of her gentleness,) gave her a lash

with his whip; this made her run about ten feet, and then sit down again. The gentleman not finding the cherries ripe, immediately returned the same way, and near the place where he struck the hare, he espied a rattlesnake. Still, not suspecting the charm, he goes back about twenty yards to a hedge to get a stick to kill the snake, and, at his return, found the snake removed and coiled in the same place whence he had moved the hare. This put him into immediate thoughts of looking for the hare again, and, soon he espied her about ten feet off the snake, in the same place to which she had been started when he whipped her. She was now lying down, but would sometimes raise herself on her forefeet, struggling as it were for life, or to get away; but could never raise her hinder parts from the ground, and then would fall flat on her side again, panting vehemently. In this condition the hare and snake were when he called me; and though we were all three come up within fifteen feet of the snake, to have a full view of the whole, he took no notice at all of us, nor so much as gave a glance towards us. There we stood at least half an hour, the snake not altering a jot, but the hare often struggling and falling on its side

again, till at last the hare lay still, as dead, for some time: then the snake moved out of his coil, and slid gently and smoothly towards the hare, *his colours at that instant being ten times more glorious and shining than at other times.* As the snake moved along, the hare happened to fetch another struggle; upon which the snake made a stop, lying at his length till the hare lay quiet again for a short space; and then he advanced again till he came to the hare,"—and, to shorten the worthy historian's story, he swallowed it.

It would seem, that, in this case, the hare actually gave up the ghost before the serpent seized him, so mortally efficacious was the charm. But at this we ought not to be surprised. Levaillant, the celebrated naturalist and traveller, relates two instances that occurred under his own observation, of deaths thus produced, the one of a shrike, which was killed by a snake three and a half feet off, the other a mouse destroyed by a reptile at double the distance—the distances having been carefully measured by the accurate philosopher. "I stripped," says he, "the bird before the whole company, and made them observe that it was untouched, and had not received the slightest wound." "Upon taking up the

mouse," he adds, "it expired in my hand, without its being possible for me to discover, by the most attentive examination, what had occasioned its death."

Nor are we to consider the charming faculty capable of being exercised only at the expense of the smaller and meaner races of animals. It will be easy to show, that, when a snake has a mind for higher game, he has but to turn his eyes upon it, and thus overcome any animal he has a fancy for. It is but a month or two since we had an account in the newspapers of the killing of a huge rattlesnake in Alabama, a monster thirteen and a half feet long, in whose maw was discovered a full grown fox. This, I take it, was manifestly a case of fascination; for it is quite impossible to suppose any fox in the world would have suffered himself to be eaten by a snake, unless the latter had charmed the cunning out of him.

But let us skip all intermediate animals, and prove that the fascinating faculty is sometimes powerful enough even to enthrall *human beings*—that men, women, and children have been brought as thoroughly under its sway as the meanest mouse or sparrow that ever squeaked in vain to a serpent for mercy.

I might, I think with the utmost propriety, include in this category the instance of a little child of eighteen months or two years old, who, a few years since, having had his dinner crammed into his hand, stole out of his father's cabin to munch it at liberty, and was soon after, to the horror of his parents, discovered under a bush, stuffing his apple pie down the throat of a blacksnake. To think that any thing short of fascination could have choused a hungry urchin of two years old out of his dinner, I hold to be midsummer madness; and accordingly, I put this down in my tablets as an instance of the fascination of a human being by a serpent; though sufficiently provided with other cases, which the reader will perhaps hold to be still more striking and satisfactory.

Dr. Williams, of whom I have already made honourable mention, has added, in his history, to the case mentioned several instances of the fascination of human beings by reptiles, all of them so well authenticated, and so curious in themselves, that it would be a sin of the greatest magnitude to pass them by.

The first is a story, authenticated by Samuel Beach, a naturalist, of two boys in

New Jersey, who, being in the woods looking for cattle, lighted by chance upon a large blacksnake; upon which, one of them, an inquisitive imp, immediately resolved to ascertain by experiment whether the snake, so celebrated for its powers, could charm or fascinate *him*; he requested his companion to take up a stick, and keep a good eye upon the snake, to prevent evil consequences, while he made trial of its powers. "This," says Mr. Beach, "the other agreed to do; when the first advanced a few steps nearer the snake, and made a stand, looking steadily on him. When the snake observed him in that situation, he raised his head with a quick motion, and the lad says, that at that instant there appeared something to flash in his eyes, which he could compare to nothing more similar than the rays of light thrown from a glass or mirror when turned in the sunshine: he said, it dazzled his eyes; at the same time, the colours appeared very beautiful, and were in large rings, circles, or rolls, and it seemed to be dark to him every where else, and his head began to be dizzy, much like being over swift running water. He then says, he thought he would go from the snake; and, as it was dark every where but in the circles, he was fearful

of treading any where else; and as they still grew in less circumference, he could not see where to step: but as the dizziness in his head still increased, and he tried to call his comrade for help, but could not speak, it then appeared to him as though he was in a vortex or whirlpool, and that every turn brought him nearer the centre. His comrade, who had impatiently waited, observing him move forward to the right and left, and at every turn approach nearer the snake, making a strange groaning noise, not unlike a person in a fit of the nightmare, he said he could stand still no longer, but immediately ran and killed the snake, which was of the largest size. The lad that had been charmed was much terrified, and in a tremor; his shirt was, in a few moments, wet with sweat, he complained much of a dizziness in his head, attended with pain, and appeared to be in a melancholy, stupid situation for some days."

Another case is given on the authority of Col. Claghorn, of Rutland, Vt., and relates to two men of Salisbury in Connecticut, named Baker and Nichols. "Going towards the meeting-house in that place, they discovered a large rattlesnake in a plain open piece of land. The snake lay coiled up in a posture

of defence. To attack him with safety, they procured a long slender pole or switch, with which they could reach him without being in any danger from his motions. As the snake could not escape, they diverted themselves with irritating him with their pole, without giving him any considerable wound. They had carried on this business some time, during which the snake had repeatedly attempted to spring upon them from his coils, and to escape by running, and discovered uncommon appearances of rage and disappointment. Being prevented in all his attempts to escape from, or to bite, his opposers, he suddenly stretched himself at his full length, and fixed his eyes on the man who was tickling him with the end of the pole. The snake lay perfectly still, and Mr. Nichols kept on the same motions with his switch. When this scene had continued for a short time, Mr. Nichols seemed to incline his body more and more towards the snake, and began to move towards him in a very slow and irregular manner. Baker, who stood looking on, noticed these appearances, and called to Nichols to desist from the business, and despatch the snake. He took no notice of these admonitions, but appeared to have his whole attention fixed on

the snake, was observed to be gradually moving towards him, to have a pale aspect, and to be in a profuse sweat. Alarmed with the prospect, Baker took him by the shoulders, gave him a violent shake, pulled him away by force, and inquired what was the matter. Nichols, thus forced from the scene, made an uncommon mournful noise of distress, appeared to be uncommonly and universally affected, and in a few minutes replied to the inquiries, that he did not know what ailed him, that he could not tell how he felt, that he had never felt so before, that he did not know what was the matter with him, but was very unwell."

A third case is the fascination of a lady of Lansingburg, on the North River, vouched for by Mr. Watkins, a minister of the gospel, whom she informed of the adventure. The spell was in this case relieved by a passer-by; when the disenchanted lady immediately felt "as though she had been among poisonous herbs, itching, &c. which issued in a long fit of sickness, which her physician ascribed to the fascination of the snake; and she had not recovered," says the reverend narrator, "when I saw her."

The fourth case recorded by Dr. Williams

is still more interesting, being the direct personal account of the sufferer himself, a Mr. Elias Willard, of Tinmouth, Vermont, whom Dr. Williams characterizes as "a man of much information, virtue, and veracity."

"When I was a boy about thirteen years old," says Mr. Willard, "my father sent me into a field to mow some briers. I had not been long employed when I discovered a large rattlesnake, and looked round for something to kill him; but not readily discovering a weapon, my curiosity led me to view him. He lay coiled up, with his tail erect, and making the usual singing noise with his rattles. I had viewed him but a short time, when the most vivid and lively colours that imagination can paint, and far beyond the powers of the pencil to imitate, among which yellow was the most predominant, and the whole drawn into a bewitching variety of gay and pleasing forms, were presented to my eyes; at the same time, my ears were enchanted with the most rapturous strains of music, wild, lively, complicated and harmonious, in the highest degree melodious, captivating, and enchanting, far beyond any thing I ever heard before or since, and indeed far exceeding what my imagination, in any other situation,

could have conceived. I felt myself irresistibly drawn toward the hated reptile; and as I had been often used to seeing and killing rattlesnakes, and my senses were so absorbed by the gay vision and rapturous music, I was not for some time apprehensive of much danger: but suddenly recollecting what I had heard the Indians relate (but what I had never before believed,) of the fascinating power of these serpents, I turned with horror from the dangerous scene; but it was not without the most violent efforts that I was able to extricate myself. All the exertions I could make with my whole strength were hardly sufficient to carry me from the scene of horrid, yet pleasing enchantment; and while I forcibly dragged off my body, my head seemed to be irresistibly drawn to the enchanter by an invisible power. And I fully believe, that in a few moments longer, it would have been wholly out of my power to make an exertion sufficient to get away. The latter part of the scene, I was extremely frightened, and ran as fast as possible towards home, my fright increasing with my speed. The first person I saw was my uncle, who, discovering my fright, ran to meet me, and asked the occasion of it: I told him I had

been frightened by a rattlesnake, but was in too great a perturbation to relate the whole. He rallied me for my pusillanimity, and took me by the hand; and we went to the place where the snake was still lying, which was soon despatched by my uncle. I then related the story to him and have since told it to many other persons. The night following, I never closed my eyes. The same scene continually haunted my imagination. Whether the agitation was occasioned merely by the recollection of what had passed, or whether the operation of the charm still had some real effect upon the nervous system, I cannot determine."

To these instances must be added another—also in the words of the victim—related by Levillant. The subject of the adventure was a captain in the British army. "While in garrison in Ceylon," said the soldier, "amusing myself one day hunting in a marsh, I was, in the course of my sport, suddenly seized with a convulsive and involuntary trembling, different from any thing I had ever experienced, and at the same time was strongly attracted, and in spite of myself, to a particular spot of the marsh. Directing my eyes to the spot, I discovered with feelings

of horror, a serpent of enormous size, whose look instantly pierced me. Having, however, not yet lost all power of motion, I embraced the opportunity, before it was too late, and saluted the reptile with the contents of my fusee. The report was a talisman that broke the charm. All at once, as if by miracle, my convulsion ceased; I felt myself able to fly; and the only inconvenience of this extraordinary adventure was a cold sweat, which was doubtless the effect of my fear, and of the violent agitation my senses had undergone."

The above case is the more remarkable, as the gallant captain was charmed even before he had *seen* the snake that charmed him; so that, it seems, the eyes of a reptile are not his only tools of trade.

A very marvellous case, a year or two since, ran through the newspapers, of a gentleman in Georgia, who, being out fishing on the banks of a wooded river, and having little of the luck, and none of the philosophy, of honest old Isaac Walton, stuck his rod in the mud, and fell asleep; during which, he was, in a very dastardly manner, set upon by a rattlesnake, who charmed him, and would perhaps have devoured him, had it not been for a rival blacksnake (or king-snake, as it is

called in that part of the world,) who, luckily, at that moment appeared, and ended the spell by darting upon the enchanter, and squeezing him to death.

To these cases I cannot avoid adding another, perhaps more singular than any yet recorded, and related to me by the subject, an honest old negro of Delaware, for whose veracity, in this particular case, at least, I am quite willing to stand sponsor. Old Bob, for such was his name, was ditching in his master's meadow, a place famous for all kinds of snakes, venomous ones excepted; a circumstance no wise agreeable to Old Bob, who held all reptiles in equal horror and detestation, and had, in especial, a great dread of their powers of fascination. While toiling thus, in constant alarm, bare-footed in the shallow trench he was excavating among sedges and splatterdocks, he was suddenly terrified at the sight of a snake's head peering out of the mud and water within six inches of his shins. "Lorra my! massa,"—he was used to exclaim, while telling his story, and endeavouring to explain his terrible sensations—"saw his eyes a peepin' out of his black head—saw de fiah a flashin' out of 'em, guy! like fiah a flashin' out of a gun:

golly my ! nebber war so scared. Peeped me right in the face—Oh, pshaw ! nebber felt so in my life. Wanted to run, massa, but no more run than a barn-door; stuck fast in the mud—could'nt move—all over with niggah !”—In short, old Bob, after a terrible paroxysm of fright and fascination together, that bound him for a moment, hand and limb, bethought him suddenly of the ditching spade still in his grasp; with which, urged by desperation, he aimed a terrible blow at the head, and succeeded in slicing off—not the head of a snake, but the best part of his own great toe !—which, tilted up by a clod, was the serpent that had fascinated him, there being no other, at that moment, in sight.

These remarkable facts, which philosophers are loath to attribute to a magical faculty of fascination in the reptiles that play so important a part in them, they have endeavoured to explain away by sundry ingenious theories, which may now be briefly noticed.

The first which I shall notice, because the most recent, and because it has most acceptance among unbelievers, is that of an American philosopher, the late distinguished Dr. Barton, who, in a paper printed in an early volume of the Transactions of the American Philosophi-

cal Society, had the credit of demolishing all previous theories, as well as of annihilating the fascinating power itself—a credit which he enjoyed until a very recent period, when the great Cuvier petrified the philosophic world by declaring that the subject of reptile fascination was by no means cleared up, but on the contrary, as liable to controversy as ever. Dr. Barton explained every thing by referring to the well known thievish propensities and hungry appetites of reptiles, and the devoted attachment, equally notorious, of the lesser animals, especially birds, to their young; in the defence of which from the attacks of the rapacious enemy, the latter would naturally display much maternal anxiety, and as naturally sometimes, by mere accident, fall into the power of the assailant. It is highly probable, or indeed quite certain, that small birds have often thus heroically sacrificed themselves, and that observers have wrongfully attributed their death to fascination; but as it does not appear, that any of the *human beings*, whose cases have been mentioned, had any callow broods to take care of, it is quite evident the theory of Dr. Barton will not meet all cases, and is, therefore, not the true one.

Professor Kalm and Sir Hans Sloane were

of opinion, that the animals supposed to be fascinated, had been first *bitten* by the charmers, and that their agitation, cries, and fruitless struggles to escape, were the natural effects of an envenomed wound and approaching death. This solution cannot be admitted; because animals, as experience shows, when bitten by reptiles, are always wise enough to take to their wings, or heels;—because, bitten or not, the moment the charm is interrupted, the animal flees, or flies, away;—and because it will not apply to animals charmed by black-snakes, whose bite is not at all venomous: not to speak of the fact that the shrike and the mouse so carefully examined by Levailant, and our human sufferers as above mentioned, had in no case received so much as a scratch.

Other persons have thought, that, as all animals are subject to disease, and hundreds of the smaller ones, especially birds, squirrels, and rabbits, are daily left by gunners wounded and half dead in the fields, the difficulty might be settled by supposing these poor disabled creatures the subjects of apparent fascination. This is, however, met by some of the preceding objections: sick or not, the animal displays sufficient activity, the moment

his fascinating oppressor receives a good thwack on the back.

Others, again, have supposed, with Blumenbach, that the curiosity excited by the jingling music of the rattlesnake, and terror, operating to such an extent as to deprive the animal of all power of escape, will explain the whole mystery of fascination. But curiosity, as an operating cause, must be thrown aside; since all charmers are not rattlesnakes; and as for the fear of a peril which can be easily escaped, and is not imminent at first, it is difficult to suppose that it should so completely overpower the physical faculties of any animal whatever. Where the occasion is very sudden, or unusually frightful, it is easy to conceive of such a paroxysm and ecstasy of terror as shall deprive an animal of all corporeal power. Such is the frenzy of horses and cattle in a stable on fire. Pigeons and storks have been known to dart down into the flames of a burning city; and in the same way, birds have been brought down from the air by the shouts of a great army. But there can be nothing similar in the terror inspired by a serpent—a spectacle customary enough to all the little dwellers of the woods and fields. Besides, who can suppose that a

British Captain in India, who had doubtless hunted his tiger, and shot his wild elephant, should grow chicken-hearted at sight of a *cobra da capello*? or that a full blooded Yankee, who had slaughtered his *cord* or two of snakes, should ever show the white feather to a single rattler?

The last theory I shall mention is the earliest in date, being recorded by Pliny, and revived by the philosophic Count de Lacépède; both of whom refer the phenomenon of fascination to an intoxicating emanation, which reptiles are supposed to throw out at will, inebriating all animals within its influence. The adventure of the bold Briton, who was charmed before he saw the cobra, is somewhat in favour of this doctrine; which is by no means so absurd in itself as many may be inclined to think. The effluvium of the vanilla intoxicates the labourer who gathers it; the manchineel, the elder, and other narcotic shrubs produce a baleful effect on persons sleeping under their shade. That an animal should have the power to exhale a noxious emanation does not seem a whit more extraordinary than the faculty which others possess of dispensing light and electric shocks. Plausible, however, as this ancient theory may seem, it receives

a death blow from some of the cases I have narrated. In the instances of the two boys and the two men, it appears that the snakes were able to charm only one individual at a time; whereas, had an intoxicating effluvium been the means used, both the adventurers must, in each instance, have been fascinated together.

The bright and beautiful lights that seemed to have attended each case of man-charming, and the ravishing music heard by Willard, are phenomena, which may perhaps assist some happier theorist in building up a more poetical hypothesis. As for myself, I do not pretend to speculate upon the subject, being content to believe, without attempting to play the philosopher.

The facts of serpent-charming, as I have mentioned, are generally credited by the sages. Some, however, affect not merely to doubt, but even to discard them, as being the coinages, or idle imaginings, of ignorant country-people, whose representations are, of course, to be considered of no account whatever. This is carrying scepticism too far. The country people, from whom indeed most of the accounts come, are, as no less a man than Burke tells us, "better observers,

in such matters, than more civilized and reasoning people, for they rely more upon experience than theories." And, moreover, many of these relations come from men of admitted intelligence and integrity.

Other persons attack the accounts, more slyly and adroitly, with objections; two of which, being somewhat striking, and apparently conclusive, it is proper to notice.

The first objection is, that no snake ever exercises a fascinating faculty *in a cage*. This objection, unluckily for the makers, asserts what is not the fact. An early number of the London Philosophical Transactions contains a perfectly well authenticated account by Dr. Sprengell, of several experiments performed upon female vipers in cages, with mice; which being thrown into the cage, were charmed, danced about, squeaked, and ended by running down the vipers' throats.

The other objection is, that, however frequent were the cases *formerly* told and recorded of reptile fascination, none ever occur, none are ever heard of *now*.

To this I beg leave to say, that it is a great mistake—that cases are still of frequent occurrence—that they happen, indeed, every day, and under every body's nose—

and that any one curious on the subject, needs but to open his eyes and look about him, to see them—cases of fascination by reptiles a hundred fold more strongly endowed with the charming faculty than common serpents, though belonging, as I believe, to the blacksnake and rattlesnake families—and producing effects proportionably greater and more destructive.

Look—as any one may—at that crawling thing, with forked tongue—the blackest of blacksnakes—that has crept into the bower of the innocent maid, upon whom he has set his serpent glance—into whose ears he has hissed the music of perdition!—Fascinated by a look that seems of love, lulled by a voice that has stolen the tones of tenderness, the innocent maid dreams of joy and happiness, of faith and affection; while, all the while, the reptile is writhing his folds around her neck, and burying his fangs in her bosom.

And *there* crawls another of the blacksnake family!—his basilisk look is upon the widow holding her orphan upon her knee, and smiling upon the reptile, in whom her deluded eyes—for he has cast his spell upon her—see only the form of a friend and protector—a

friend and protector that will grind her bones and the bones of her little one to powder.

And here is one of the rattlesnake family—a subtle beast, that bears upon his tail a dice-box, with which he jangles such a melody of fascination, that, presently, you shall see that bright-eyed youth—a sparrow, or pigeon, from whom he has already plucked every feather—bitten to death, and laid, a gory corse, in a grave of dishonour.

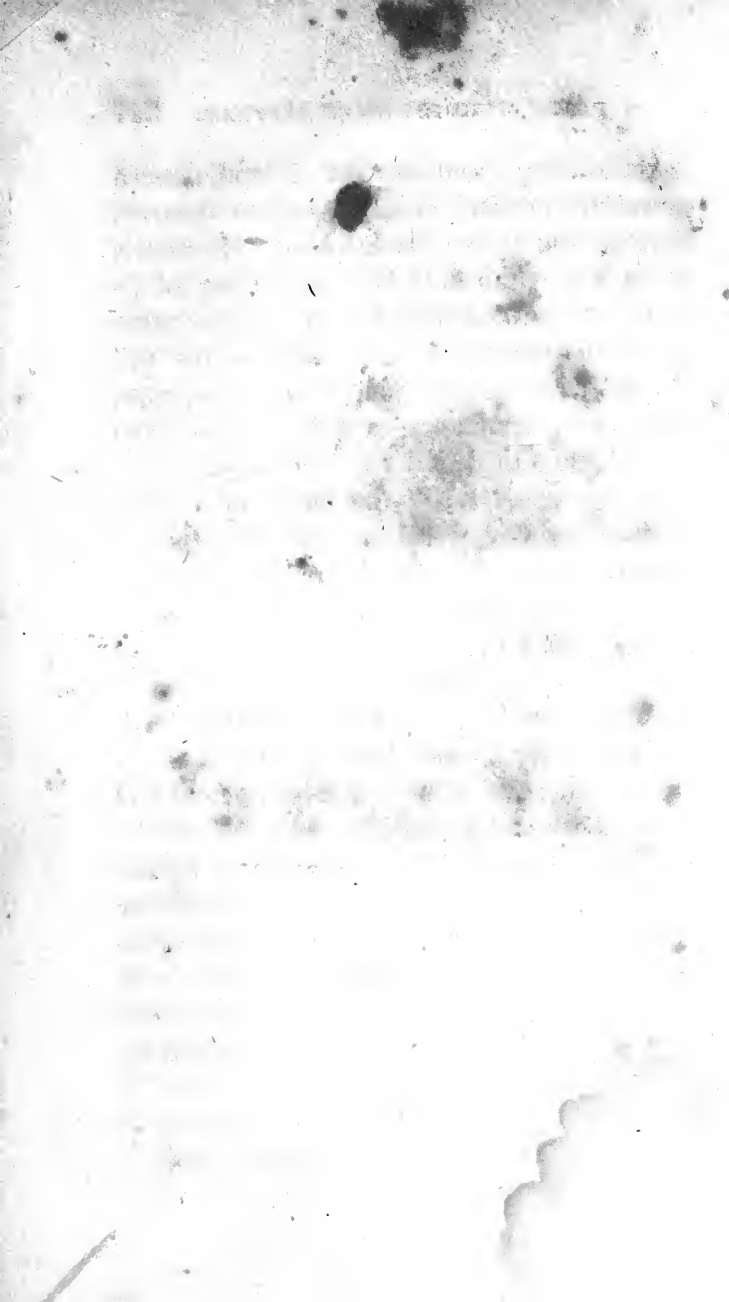
And here rolls another—a fat and swelling monster, golden of hue, and on his tail, for a rattle, a cask of dollars, labelled over with price-currents and maps of town-lots, all glorious to behold and bewitching to hear; and around him a knot of hopeful fools, dazzled by the glittering speculation of his eyes, all pressing forward to be—devoured.

Another yet!—and behold how comely of aspect and amiable of hue, with the crest of a *cobra* on his head, whereon is written *Philanthropy*, and at his tail a bundle of lucifer-matches and tomahawks, wherewith, as he charms the virtuous multitude, he supplies them the means (for he himself harms not) of knocking one another's brains out, and setting a community in flames.

See yet another—a lank, homely, insigni-

ficant-looking creature, yet a reptile more powerful to charm, more strong to destroy, than all who have preceded him. He crawls through the multitude, hissing a song of liberty, a collar round his throat with the name of *Patriot* engraved thereon, and at his tail a cluster of penny-trumpets and popguns, with which he makes a music that sets all to dancing with joy, and to knocking one another upon the head; the while he crawls upon their necks, wreathing them together in hideous chains, and, as he wreathes, sucking away their blood and substance.

Thousands of reptiles such as these, and thousands of others of different hues and species, creep round about us, plying their basilisk arts every hour and every moment, making victims alike of high and low, of old and young, wise and weak, rich and poor; and he who, from some safe covert, will look awhile upon them and their operations, will never afterwards doubt the existence of—the Fascinating Power of Reptiles.



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